BREAKING DOWN THE WALLS

A Contribution to Methodist Unification

BY

EARL CRANSTON

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.
—Eph. 2. 14.

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DEDICATION

To the majesty and glory of Jesus Christ, the Divine Head of the Church, these pages are reverently and adoringly dedicated, with the devout prayer that they may be so interpreted to the hearts of His Methodist people by His Holy Spirit that they may promote the peace of His Kingdom on earth and set forward the day of His coronation as King of kings and Lord of lords—the day of God the Father and of His redeemed household.

EARL CRANSTON.

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PERSONAL AND INTRODUCTORY

PERHAPS it was my experience as church publisher, in handling other men's books, that has saved me heretofore from "writing a book." Even now the fever of authorship does not possess me. But when a man's heart and brain throb together under the pressure of an impelling persuasion that God would have some things said which no one else seems moved to say, then may that man even write a book—at least a little one.

Fifty years ago it was "woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel," at whatever sacrifice of cherished plans and ambitions. Having yielded to that conviction, I shall not be deemed erratic if, after all the intervening years of service under that call, I hold that every church as an organic body is no less bound at every crisis in its career to follow God's way and will at whatever sacrifice of corporate aims and ambitions; and, that the

church refusing obedience must fall under condemnation, and go into spiritual bankruptcy, whatever its ecclesiastical pretensions. The church of my life and service has come to such a crisis. God is calling Methodism to mighty tasks. She must prepare His way and make His paths straight. Woe is to me if I preach not the gospel of reconciliation to my own people. With this impelling message in my soul, and looking already through the vanishing mists of time into the faces of the reunited hosts of Methodism, with John Wesley at their head—in the land where love has its way—I plead, with the gladness of a great hope, for the peace of our Zion.

If for me the question of Methodist Unification has been lifted above the plane of controversial discussion, it is because the duties laid upon me as a member of the Commission on Federation have led me to consider observed facts in their relation to the Word and kingdom of Jesus Christ rather than as phases of a strife between good men.

My earnest prayer is that this writing may

be saved from every taint of diplomatic artifice. God always knows the inside of words. Believing that he has prompted and is graciously concerned for the outcome of this appeal to my fellow Methodists, I am venturing all on their heart understanding of both its purpose and its language. When God is guiding the councils of his people diplomatic wariness hides away. Then kindly candor and luminous purpose may speak confidently without fear of entanglement. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," saith the Lord. Doubtless one of the abysmal differences between our ways and His way lies between the love of logic and the logic of love. Man's logic gropes through distorted facts and disputed formulas to uncertain conclusions. Love gives the verdict of the supreme wisdom offhand, and it stands for eternity.

The reader must not expect to find herein any plans and specifications for *God's work* of next year or later years. The moment we begin to discuss publicly *details* of Uni-

fication we drop into the old argument and lose the hand of God. The time must come for plans, but before we need an architect, divided Methodism must become so thoroughly ashamed of its present way of living in sight of God and men that it will be less exacting as to the details of its new habitation. No man in the world should venture the task offhand or alone.

There are points enough protruding from the general subject of Unification as now presented to provide the strong debaters and gifted orators of American Methodism exercise for many years to come. But we have had seventy years of discussion already, and as now appears seventy years more would settle nothing. As prone to argument as he is to evil, man escapes neither by indulging in it. Writing on the subject of Methodist union twenty years ago, Bishop Merrill aptly said that before the happy day dawns we would have to look away from the human to the divine side. Has not the hour come when Methodists are ready to look for the divine side? If so, they will bear with the

truth spoken in love. I beg them to pardon my plainness of speech. The little time remaining to me for saying and doing must not be wasted in hiding truth in pleasant words.

A SPECIAL WORD TO MY SOUTHERN METHODIST BRETHREN WHO MAY READ THIS BOOK

FOR the better service of God and humanity it is necessary that every man who holds official place shall sometimes forget his official role and think and speak as a brother man to men. It is due to my church and to you to say that this modest volume has no official parentage. It came not by official suggestion, nor is it in any feature or degree a part of any program except as God may so use it. It is true that but for his official opportunities to learn the facts the writer might never have been so deeply stirred by the calamitous situation of present-day Methodism; or, like thousands of his brethren in both churches, he might have passed over these lamentable conditions with dumb regret as holding evils too deep-seated for hopeful treatment. But I dare not believe there are any evils which God cannot cure *if men want*

them cured. If all the bishops and all the preachers and people of these churches could have met and prayed together as their Commissioners have done, and talked with each other in the same spirit in God's very presence, holding back nothing of grievance or complaint, and earnestly seeking an equitable Christian solution of their complicated problems, it is my belief that an end of our contentions would be already in sight. There are probably a few people in both churches to whom loyalty to church and to state, as defined in 1865 to 1875, is still synonymous and synchronous with entire sanctification, as they understand it. But, speaking for the masses of the ministers and laymen of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I am persuaded that not one in twenty is thus affected, while it is entirely safe to say that nine tenths of them earnestly desire the unification of Methodism on any honorable basis promising increased spiritual efficiency and more economical administration. They are not only ready to be just but conciliatory in negotiation. Of the type who are "bound to

have peace if they have to fight for it," there are not enough to form a picket guard.

Of another relevant fact I speak with positive assurance. This general attitude of our people toward the organic merging of Methodist bodies is not the outgrowth of a silly ambition for numbers. It is, rather, the prompting of the spirit of comradeship and sincere desire for the honor and peace of Methodism.

Doubtless, if the other Methodist churches were passively waiting or morbidly anxious to be swallowed, there are among us some denominational gormands who would distend themselves and proffer the oleaginous prerequisite to such a performance. But no such vanity possesses our membership as a body. They find ample exercise in assimilating the people gathered in from their own communities.

It is a most unfortunate fact that Methodists, like other Protestant bodies, have had more experience in separating than in uniting, and naturally they are unschooled in some important points that enter into the problem

of unification. The sense of fairness on both sides will overcome this lack as they go forward.

If—just as a loyal, patriotic Methodist, loving Methodism for its own inherent value and my country for what it stands for before the world—I could reach the ear of every district superintendent and presiding elder and pastor in our two churches to-day, I would beseech him to stop every aggressive movement calculated to provoke bad feeling, pending the discussion of Unification. Why not, on both sides, determine that what ought to be done shall be done and done quickly, and having so pledged God and each other, *act as if it were already done?* The effect on the temper of both churches will be immediate and wholesome.

This point settled, then let us *unite in revival work everywhere*, thus giving the Holy Spirit open way to demonstrate his approval of the brotherly pact.

Let us all be plain, honest, God-fearing, and man-loving Methodists, forgetting for the next five years the words "North" and

"South," and all our grievances, past and present. I verily believe that if as a thank-offering to God for his patience with us, leaders and people will do this as a reasonable living-sacrifice service, the year 1920 will bring the jubilee of reunited Methodism.

Yours for peace and goodwill,

EARL CRANSTON.

CHAPTER I

PREPARATION OF HEART

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.—Eph. 4. 31, 32.

If the reader has been kind enough to seek this writer's motive and standpoint as set forth in the introductory pages, he already has some preparation of mind for what is to follow. But the task confronting Episcopal Methodism at this juncture involves the most sacred spiritual obligations. It requires preparation of heart. The answer of an Arab sheikh, on being asked the loan of a rope by his neighbor, was that he needed it to tie up his milk. To the rejoinder that he could not tie up milk with a rope, he replied, "When a man does not want to do a thing one reason is as good as another."

That answer might do for an Arab of the desert. Its like will not do for Methodism in America while holding aloft the standard of conscience, love, truth, and faith in ultimate righteousness. More than we suspect do we *think* in our *hearts.* An *unwilling* heart is a nest of lame excuses and fallacious reasonings. An *unloving* heart cannot hold fellowship with Jesus Christ. In such measure as the people called Methodists feel drawn to him they will be drawn toward each other. Only in moving toward Christ will they ever come together. The Joint Commission on Federation, which was intended to be a clearing house for their troubles has proved to be, rather, a central station for the wires that voice the words of strife along the line of conflict. Alas, there have been repeated transmissions of "bitterness" and "clamor" and "wrath" and "malice." The wires ring with mutual accusations. The heart of Christ is the only clearing house for our differences. The movement for the Unification of Methodism must begin in a sincere repentance if it is

to end in a regenerated and reunited church. The sins to be confessed are not all on one side. Self-righteousness does not become either body. Too long have we been bringing our gifts to the altar without remembering that our brothers had somewhat against us. We have had altars here and there and everywhere—altar over against altar—but no altar nor wailing place where bishops and preachers and people might confess offenses against Christian brotherhood. Even churches may behave indecently. We have so long failed as churches to conform to the requirements for salvation which we have been preaching to sinners that we now offend unconsciously rather than willfully. If, however, we closely examine our working motives, we may have to confess that if conscience has not been seared by the heat of strife it has at least been salved by the self-deception that the end aimed at in our inter-church contentions is the glory of God. This delusion is doubly destructive. First, partisan strife blinds judgment and strangles charity; next, "to do evil that good may

come"—even if good could come that way—is to justify all the historical atrocities of bloody propagandism. Only in our Adamic moods do we dare plead that "the end justifies the means."

No branch of Methodism has ceased to preach a gospel of complete deliverance from all that offends God. Why then should not these churches confess their sin and cleanse their corporate polity and behavior? Other corporate bodies may have no souls, but church organisms claim to be spiritually vitalized by the Holy Ghost. O the amazing patience of God, whose love for the children of men uses even such strident organs as contentious churches to set penitent hearts to singing the wonders of his grace! But how much richer would be their gospel notes if their voices were in tune with their message!

The two Episcopal Methodisms will prove themselves to be deplorably lacking in spiritual sensitiveness if they fail to recognize that God has led them up to their crucial test of devotion to his kingdom at this world-purging epoch in human history. While

all the great professedly Christian nations of Europe are in deadly combat for self-advantage and commercial supremacy, and the cry is abroad that Christianity has failed, these two evangelical communions, of one doctrine and polity, are most significantly called upon to demonstrate the efficiency of Christ's teachings for peace within his own kingdom. The inference is inevitable that if it fails there, where spiritual considerations are supposed to be supreme, and the words of Jesus final authority, then by the confession of his own church his religion ceases to be a guarantee of peace anywhere—not even as against ecclesiastical ambition.

One special caution is needed in the present crisis of Methodism. Against this holy enterprise of unification the powers of darkness are sure to be arrayed. There will be labyrinths of false reasonings and mazes of perverted quotations from the alleged statements of prominent persons in both churches. One outspoken friend of unification, referring to a reported clash of conflicting interests, found comfort in the

remark that all would soon be the property of one Methodism. He was amazed when he found himself reported as a prophet of the *absorption* of the smaller bodies by the larger—a proposition utterly alien to his thought. And already prominent voices in the Southern church have been quoted in utterances calculated to provoke antagonism and very seriously interfere with fair discussion of the proposition for union. Let it therefore be fixed in every mind at the outset that any alleged confession of sinister motive by responsible men of either church is unthinkable; and that any remark, public or private, that savors of partisan feeling can have no bearing in dignified discussion. Let no man's partisan warcry confuse judgment. What God would rule out let us not admit as worthy of our hearing. There must always be some, among so many voices, whose words are like the frothings of political zealots or the prattle of children in their games. Why give them heed? May God help every Methodist preacher, especially, to realize that we are dealing with interests

too high and sacred to allow the issue to be affected in the least degree by common gossip, foolish vaporings, or attempts at pagan diplomacy. Let us think and act on the higher plane which better becomes our Christian profession.

And since all true Methodists believe more in prayer than in argument, for setting forward the kingdom of Christ, let every soul bring its desire to the Father. It may be awkward to ask God to keep his Methodist people apart and in strife, but it will be a fair spiritual test of one's opinions if they seem to incline that way at any stage in the impending negotiations. Talking with God is better than listening to men at such a time and in such a matter. Prayer is a wonderful corrective of human judgment, especially when there is cause to suspect the subconscious effect of old prejudices or habits of thought on one's present opinions. An English Methodist, who had the traditional British trait well developed, confesses that when he resorted to prayer to thwart the union of two branches of English Meth-

odism on terms unsatisfactory to him, he found *he could not pray.* That ended his opposition. While the Holy Spirit thus resents a partisan harangue under the guise of prayer, He is easily entreated for the peace of Zion. "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weigheth the spirits" (Prov. 16. 2). Are we ready for this test of our attitude toward this momentous call of God upon American Methodists to exemplify the fundamental principles of Christian brotherhood?

CHAPTER II

THE GENESIS OF ECCLESIASTICAL MILITANCY

We cannot see all that God sees, but we may at least get a better view of the divine side of earthly affairs by standing as near to him as possible while we look—the nearer the better, both for clear atmosphere and for trustworthy vision. Only from this Christian viewpoint can we secure a clear impression of the moral and spiritual issues which we are to consider. For such souls as dare not trust their spiritual eyesight, history serves as a helpful handbook of divine estimates and decisions. It is a historical truism that all war has its inception in human selfishness. Interchurch wars are not to be excepted. Pure Christianity was intended to cure selfishness, but ecclesiastical partisanship has dangerously adulterated the cure. Let us, for the time at least, suppress our denom-

inational habits of thought and judgment and get back to primary facts and first principles.

Trace the genesis of ecclesiastical militancy. God sent salvation into the world to meet the needs of human souls. But human greed soon found a way to commercialize God's free gift and to turn salvation into an ecclesiastical commodity, which in course of time passed under control of a monopolistic hierarchy. Growing stronger and bolder, this ecclesiastical monopoly began, after a time, to peddle crowns and thrones. Such booty of power inevitably bred wars, and an apostate church did not hesitate to create or subsidize armies, and, in the name of the Lord, to sanctify war in its every hideous torture and horrible ravage for the advancement of its secularized ambitions. Out of such a hell of confusion the reformers had at last to fight their way with the sword back to the freedom of the gospel. It took fresh, warm blood to soak away the accumulated coagulations that had kept the Bible sealed for centuries, and then the Old Book opened very slowly, and with the Old Testa-

ment warriors to the front as leading expositors under the auspices of rulers yet vigilantly militant. Even the later individual reformers who here and there sought to follow the gospel simplicity of the primitive church could not escape the toils of militant ecclesiasticism without defending themselves against it soldier fashion. Protestantism, born and cradled amid scenes of violence, carries its birthmark of militarism.

It remained for the great republic to solve the problem in the large by constitutional safeguards guaranteeing religious liberty to all its people. But it soon appeared that heredity has a grip on men which they cannot shake off in a few generations. Indeed, it is so strong that they do not care to escape it. It is in the will as well as in the bones. That possibly explains why the soul of militancy is still marching on in our free American churches.

Next, and still to the point, it is the peril of newborn freedom that for a while it runs riot. In our country religious liberty took on a veritable craze of denominationalism.

This furnished a vent for the inherited spirit of combative religiosity that could no longer hew its way to victory by the sword, and led naturally to conditions in which real religion and partisan piety have become so mingled in the minds of many people that denominational loyalty easily usurps the place of conscience in men who want to fight and yet be devout. Thus, by playing issue against issue, the devil has diverted from his own gates enough spiritual energy to save the world.

The African refrain,

> "I'ze Methodis' bohn an' Methodis' bred,
> An' when I'm gone there's a Methodis' dead,"

when sung over against "Baptis' bohn and Baptis' bred," usually means nothing more religious than sprinkling *versus* immersion. So with other primitive war songs. The free churches have not had to pray for a baptism of contention. They were born fighting. They had to be, or not be born at all. They have all had their lists of doughty champions. If there is a lull in outside battles many members find satisfying exer-

cise in internal warfare. Nothing seems too sacred or too insignificant to provoke contention. The preacher, the choir, the Sunday School, the League, the Ladies' Aid, and what not, supply ready material. And how bitter these internal feuds, and how hard to heal! Why? Because of the personal element—personal interests, personal feelings, personal pride, personal ambition—self, self, self. This excludes the Holy Spirit, banishes Christ, and steels the heart against the gospel message. Yes, we scorn such petty weakling warfare, *but we allow the same spirit of baneful, selfish contentiousness* to hold its grip on us in the larger matters of God's kingdom.

As to interdenominational negotiations in general, it must be admitted that the attempts toward federation have not overcome the long-fixed habits of church militancy. Doubtless too much was expected. The Federal Council of the American Churches is serving a very important end, but it has no power whatever to enforce peace between its constituents. Even if it

had the form of authority, the average American congregation would assert its right under the civil law to control its own affairs without regard to the pledge of its denominational representatives. It may as well be admitted now as later that fraternal agreements entered into in good faith by ruling bodies cannot eradicate the competitive consciousness which plays so large a part in all human activities, and which is so constantly appealed to in denominational movements both local and general.

It is true that between the leading bodies there have been faint flickerings of interdenominational comity, but rarely, except on foreign fields, have they survived the selfish breath of local aims and ambitions. In the light of the vast expenditures made by every leading denomination to maintain its separate existence and prestige, how pitiful is the timeworn apologetic that "in essentials we are one, and differ only in nonessentials." It sounds like a confession of judgment at the bar of public opinion for the using of millions of consecrated money to perpetuate

divisions which are without justification. Divided only by nonessentials! A confession of spiritual bankruptcy to prove spiritual unity! Granted that undeveloped souls still need the stimulus of denominational rivalry, yet such souls should not be allowed to fix the standard of Christian comity for modern Protestantism. Do not the facts to-day in every town and city—the brick, stone, and marble facts, the rival-spire facts, the starveling college facts, the home mission facts in city and country—suggest that what passes for devotion to the Kingdom is a spirit perilously near to the plane of denominational Pharisaism? And Pharisaism—selfish self-righteousness—will not cure itself. It feeds and grows on its natural complacency. Denominational complacency, that both in its local and general expression seems oblivious to the existence and rights of other churches, is certainly not Christian.

Religious liberty is a boon to be forever defended, but nothing can be clearer to-day than that denominational rivalry has betrayed ecclesiastical freedom into a licentious

disregard of Christian ethics. Under a Christian interchurch comity the *common welfare* would be the first consideration and dominant aim. The fostering of partisan spirit excludes the spirit of brotherhood.

As for Methodism it has always claimed a divinely called and providentially directed ministry. Rationally related to this claim is the grateful confession that it was God, not man, who brought this mighty force into action in the formative period of the republic. No single agency has done more to save liberty from licentiousness than the preaching which harmonized freedom with the wholesome restraints of a divine order. Startling it is that Methodism has fallen into the same peril from which it sought to save the young republic. For a century there was such abundant room for its pioneer ministry that even its divisions could be looked upon as merely illustrative of the rights of individual judgment and conscience—a demonstration that for a time had its value. But conditions have changed. The nation has entered upon a new era.

The pioneer constructive period has passed. The Territories are all States, save one, a late acquisition. The governments, national and State, have taken permanent form. Border lines are fixed. There is now no frontier. No cities and but few towns and villages are without daily tidings of all the rest of the world. Colleges, schools, churches are everywhere. For the churches there is still frontier work, though it is pierced by railroads and bounded by towns and cities, where they are crowding each other.

The nation has suddenly discovered that this rapid development has been attended by alarming waste of its natural resources, and that the time has come for the careful conservation of what remains, and for the more productive use of what is being consumed. Hence, coordination, cooperation, and concentration are the watchwords of progress to-day. The demand is for economy, and for added efficiency for every factor employed in constructive development. Statesmen, business men, all the professions, the trades and soil-tillers recognize the call

for new economic adjustments, and act accordingly. Only the churches lag behind. While God and angels, world-opportunity, national perils at home and abroad, and the woes of humanity everywhere, are calling to them to get together, to consolidate their strength, to coordinate their plans, to combine their resources, to concentrate their legions, and so stop the waste of both material wealth and spiritual energy through disjointed and even contentious operations, they as yet give little heed. The "Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America" is a great and timely organization, but it is an alliance only, under carefully phrased limitations which guard the denominational integrity and freedom of its constituent churches and leave the Council no arbitral functions as between denominations and no mediatorial office whatever for the uniting of churches of like faith. So our most advanced sentiment in Protestantism leaves the fire-brand foxes still abroad in the standing corn—which in this case does not belong to Philistines.

CHAPTER III

THE TREATY STATUS IN EPISCOPAL METHODISM

THE main difficulties attending the unification of Methodism seem to lie between the two larger bodies. With these two once agreed, the other branches would have a clearer vision of the outlook for a more comprehensive reorganization. It is for this reason that our present discussion concerns most directly Episcopal Methodism. But whatever may come to these larger communions, no one who heard the pleas of Dr. Thomas H. Lewis as he has spoken for the Methodist Protestant Church before both the General Conferences of Episcopal Methodism can forget the inspiration of his message, and no friend of this holy cause can cease to hope and pray that our brethren of that church may share with us the fellowship of a reorganized and unified Methodism.

Their commissioners aided much in the working out of the "Suggestions" adopted by the Church South in 1914, and now being considered by the other parties thereto.

Naturally, we must first notice, and in the briefest possible manner, the treaty status between the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. For sixty years after the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784, Methodism increasingly thrived on both free and slave territory. In 1844, by reason of conditions beyond its control, the church became two bodies.

In 1845 the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was organized, and in 1848 Dr. Lovick Pierce appeared at the session of our General Conference at Pittsburgh, commissioned to bear the fraternal greetings of the new organization. But serious disagreements had already arisen concerning the Plan of Separation, and our General Conference refused to receive Dr. Pierce in his representative capacity, though he was heartily welcomed as a minister of Christ

and as a brother beloved. On taking his leave of the Conference Dr. Pierce left an official statement that his church could never renew the offer of fraternal relations, but that the proposition might be renewed at any time by the Methodist Episcopal Church, "and that if made upon the basis of the Plan of Separation as adopted by the General Conference of 1844, the proposition would be cordially entertained."

As a feature of the situation subsequently created by the Civil War there were some aggressive movements by our church in the far South, backed up by military authority in some cases, it is said, and accompanied by reported declarations of policy on the part of some leaders, which greatly aggravated the unhappy relations of the two churches. Under the provocation of these events the General Conference of the Church South in 1866 voted its way open to Northern territory *when invited* by persons desiring affiliation with that body. Thus matters remained until our General Conference in 1868 appointed a commission to confer with

a like commission from the *African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church* on the subject of union, and then later in the session—as if an afterthought—instructed the same Commission to confer with representatives of any other Methodist body "*seeking* like union." It must be admitted that this method of approach was not a very direct way to the heart of Southern Methodists—as our bishops discovered through an overture sent to their Episcopal College in 1869. Nor is it surprising that when our Commissioners, appointed in the manner above described and acting under such indefinite instructions, appeared at the Southern General Conference in 1870, in the persons of Bishop Janes and Dr. W. L. Harris, they at once met a challenge of their authority to treat with that body, which, indeed, our church *had never yet formally recognized* as a *legal organization.* Nevertheless, our messengers were cordially received as brethren, and after their departure the General Conference (South) took what it regarded as suitable action under the circumstances, concluding

with the hope that better fraternal relations might soon be permanently established.

Accepting this unmistakable diplomatic hint, our General Conference in 1872 formally instructed the bishops to appoint "fraternal messengers" to the *General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.* That act of recognition was the beginning of direct official intercourse between the two churches. The bishops appointed Dr. Albert S. Hunt, Dr. Charles H. Fowler, and General Clinton B. Fisk as such messengers. They were warmly welcomed by the Southern brethren in 1874. The better day had dawned. Thereupon, Dr. Lovick Pierce was again commissioned—with Dr. Duncan and Chancellor Garland as associates—to bear greetings to our General Conference. It was greatly regretted that Dr. Pierce's advanced age prevented his presence, but his colleagues were received officially and cordially by our General Conference in 1876. These brethren brought with them a proposal for a Joint Commission—three ministers and two laymen from each church—empowered "to

adjust all existing difficulties," to which our General Conference responded promptly. This was a great step forward. Thus the historic Cape May meeting came about, and it found "existing difficulties" enough to occupy its time for six days.

But it is important to observe that before any business was transacted at Cape May the following "*Declaration and Basis of Fraternity*" was unanimously adopted: "*Each of said churches is a legitimate branch of Episcopal Methodism, having a common origin in the Methodist Episcopal Church organized in 1784. Since the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was consummated in 1845, by the voluntary exercise of the right of the Southern Annual Conferences, ministers and members, to adhere to that Communion, it has been an evangelical church, reared on scriptural foundations, and her ministers and members, with those of the Methodist Episcopal Church, have constituted one Methodist family, though in distinct ecclesiastical connections.*" Having thus first "cleared the decks," the Joint Commission

then proceeded to adjust disputed property questions.

What our commissioners did at Cape May was officially ratified by our General Conference in 1880—this "*Basis of Fraternity*" included. By that action it would seem that the irritating discussion of the Plan of Separation was officially closed. From that vote to this day our church stands committed to the statement that the organization of the Church South was consummated by "the voluntary exercise of the right of the Southern Conferences, ministers, and members to adhere to that communion." It should be noticed that the declaration in defining their act did not use the word "create," or "constitute," but the words "adhere to" that communion, as if a body already lawfully existing. Whatever contention had centered around the "Plan of Separation," it must be conceded that this language covers the point of *legitimate standing as an Episcopal Methodist Church. Upon that treaty interpretation of the relation between the two churches all subsequent interchanges of*

fraternal expression have been predicated. Out of this understanding was evolved later the standing Commission on Federation (1894–1896), and from that, The Federal Council (1904–1906)—which was intended to be our Methodist Hague.

In connection with these events came the authorizing of the Common Hymnal, Catechism, and Order of Worship, and the coordination of missionary operations in the foreign fields.

Another important treaty pact was entered into at Baltimore in December, 1910, introductory to the recent negotiations by Commissions representing these two and the Methodist Protestant Churches, looking to a Plan of Unification. That agreed statement was this: "*We are mutually agreed that the churches represented by us are equally apostolic in faith and purpose and have a common origin, in the Methodist Episcopal Church organized in 1784; that they are joint heirs of the traditions and doctrinal standards of the fathers, and have proved their loyalty to the evangelical faith and spirit which char-*

acterized early Methodists." This language, with its connections, was reported to our General Conference of 1912, and by its Committee on Federation was accepted as "an admirable statement" of "the present situation and resulting obligations"; and that report *was approved by the General Conference,* as was also the action of our Commission in proposing the consideration of the subject of union. But while approving the negotiations, the General Conference gave no answer whatever as to the "Suggestions" concerning unification which the Commission had also reported—an omission which, though sure to be misunderstood, as it has been, was doubtless wiser than would have been any expression after such hasty discussion as was then and there possible. The tentative "Suggestions" embodied in the report of our Commission, as formulated at Chattanooga in 1911 by the Joint Commission, were intended to set forth what seemed the only basis upon which further negotiations might be conducted—not what we on our side regarded as ideal.

With one item omitted these "Suggestions" were formally proposed by the General Conference of the Church South at its last session—1914—as a basis of reorganization. Since our next General Conference must deal with this direct overture from our sister Methodism for union on the basis proposed, it is immediately imperative that the merits of the plan be discussed not only fully but fairly. Above all other considerations in that discussion should be the loyal purpose to seek God's way and follow his will. An issue which so vitally concerns his kingdom on earth is not to be determined by arguments drawn from worldly expediency. (For the "Suggestions" in full, see Appendix, page 171.)

The item omitted in the Southern General Conference action referred to the colored membership of our church, the Methodist Protestant Church, or of any other body that might come into the movement. The Suggestion of the Joint Commission, as will be seen in Item 3, provided for the colored membership a place in the reorganization, as

one of the proposed "Quadrennial Conferences." The alteration indicated by the Church South would give the colored membership a separate organization, holding only a fraternal relation to the united churches. This is not the place to discuss that proposition. It is treated in a special chapter.

Probably no informed leader, North or South, expects that the now formally proposed plan of unification, which was slowly dug out of the debris of the battlefield by the Joint Commission, and which is now before the church for consideration, will be adopted without modification. But the plan should at least have a fair hearing, and should not be judged without a clear understanding of its meaning. *No matter by whom the outline of these propositions was first presented, nor how long ago, nor whose contention would seem to prevail in their acceptance, the one question for consideration by the sane and conservative Methodists of to-day is their practical working value for the end sought.* What that end should be, as the author views the mission and obligation of Methodism, appears in the pages that follow.

CHAPTER IV

THE SACREDNESS OF TREATIES

AMONG the most significant declarations of the two General Conferences was one to the effect that where either church is doing the work expected of Methodism in any community, the other church should not organize a society or erect a church in that community without the approval of the bishop having jurisdiction in the case. The unsatisfactory outcome of this well meant agreement may be inferred from the following, published by this writer in May, 1914. The words are still pertinent:

If the preachers and people of the two great Methodist Churches in this country really prefer perpetual strife with each other, there is good fighting all along the border; and as the border now zigzags through almost every Southern, Western and Northwestern State, there is no apparent reason for any community to be dreading the

monotony of peace and good will. Just what is to be gained by either church, or for the kingdom of God, through such a mediæval method of "propagating the gospel," does not appear; nor does it seem to be a question of concern with the war party of either church.

Even the treaties of peace and amity entered into with rejoicing by these great Christian communions do not quench the battle lust that flames up when scouting parties meet on the frontier, nor restrain the zeal of partisan advocates who shout on the combat from the rear.

Time was when treaties were held to be sacred agreements made between honorable contracting parties for the common weal, through the recognition and definition of mutually acknowledged rights and obligations as the basis of friendly relations and intercourse. If the time has now come in the affairs of church or state when, as current events indicate, the original purpose of a treaty may be ignored by either party thereto, or its words juggled to suit the convenience or exigencies of either party, then there is

an end of constitutional government as well as international law, and we face a condition of anarchy both internal and world-wide. Can it be that the world question back of its vast and increasing navies is, "What power shall be chief pirate when chaos comes?" For, if treaties do not signify, what moral basis remains for law, order, government, and peace? If, after all, honor is only a myth, if conscience is but a lying phantom, and religion the dream of obsessed enthusiasts, where are the moral values on which national order and individual character may be founded? The man who holds to his oath, even when he may have sworn to his own hurt, not only abides in the tabernacle of God, but sanctifies the tabernacle itself as God's witness to the sacredness of all covenants. But the treaty-breaker heads straight for moral chaos, and that means hell, which was General Sherman's fitting synonym for war. [The world chaos was then not three months ahead.] Whither are we leading our world-wide Methodist *communion?* Think of that word

in such a connection. How can we fight the battles of the Kingdom at home, or claim the heathen world for Christ under the covenant-breakers' flag? Remember that these two churches have covenanted with God and with each other. Very soon after the Civil War we were on the mountaintop with him, and, looking into each other's faces in the light of his face, we knew ourselves as brethren. We came down from the mount of recognition bringing the tablet of our covenant as witness of our mutual identification. Shall the Aarons and the spoils of Egypt be our undoing, and so corrupt us that it shall repent God that he made us a people? Or, like Moses in his mediative prayer, shall we *put away headship* and count God's honor first? Before God, is not this the real crux of our unbrotherly contentions? To cry out in unison, "You violated the treaty, therefore we are no longer bound," is to forget that the Holy Spirit was the Mediator of that covenant, a party as well as a witness to its agreements, and *neither church has received, nor*

will it dare to ask, his signature to its annulment.

Nor can the treaty be destroyed by individual acts of nullification, for such corporate compacts can be construed or abrogated only by the formal action of the governments or peoples that enter into them. So far as formal expressions can go, or language declare, the General Conferences of these two churches still hold themselves bound by their covenants of fraternity, and have recently established a tribunal for their enforcement. Hence, no representative board or adminstrator or community of either church can legally or loyally act or speak as if there were no treaty in existence.

Alas! there have been and still are flagrant violations of both the letter and the spirit of the Cape May and later agreements. The roots of old animosities lie deep in our inherited prejudices, and are hard to destroy; but they are "roots of bitterness"—every one of them—and if Methodism does not know how to extirpate such remains of

original sin, she should modify her preaching on that point. To Saul of Tarsus at the stoning of Stephen, just such roots seemed to have divine flavor. Is there not a taint of the same Pharisaism in the theory that there are serious and unrecognized spiritual needs even in the overwhelmingly Methodist communities of the South which God cannot remedy without our special missionary help? Bishop Walden's last marshaling of invincible figures before the General Committee of the Home Missionary and Church Extension Society, left a solemn protest against the wasteful policy of collecting money from Methodists in our great Northern domain to be expended under missionary auspices in a section where already the ratio of Methodists to the total population is more than double that shown by the statistics where the money is collected.

From the standpoint of our treaty obligations, it is remarkable what force there is in the words, "We must follow our people." Here both churches are equally at fault. Some Southern Methodists seek Northern

homes. Some of our people go South. If they were let alone, almost all of them who care for their religion would do as many thousands have done—find happy social and spiritual relations among the "people called Methodists" in their new surroundings. Faithful pastors and genuine fellowship would soon assure this result. But in the face of the mutual concession that *both churches are entitled to equal confidence and recognition as Methodist churches*, it is too often assumed that these migrating members who have deliberately ventured into the domain of the "sister church" are in some sort of spiritual peril or pathetic isolation. The *treaty* does not intimate that; but partisan Methodism will have it so. And missionary and church extension money must be sent not on a hopeful evangelistic errand, but usually to build and maintain weak fortresses, which, however thinly manned or poorly provisioned, may at least flaunt a battle flag in the face of the "sister church"!

What could result but irritation? Then, —not to save our plighted faith, but what

the Chinese would call "our face,"—we take refuge in the suggestion that to succeed we must go with greater dignity and strength —which means *material*, not *Christian* dignity. On what theory of conquest, one might ask, love or power? We have all seen dignified church architecture vaunting itself in lonely splendor; but have we ever seen an offended and watchful people conciliated or won to confidence by the increase in their midst of armament which to them seemed both inimical in its purpose, and a challenge of their honor, their intelligence, or their fidelity to God?

Dr. Jesse Bowman Young has strongly stated (it was a little while before his death) the failure of the aggressive policy in communities that are overwhelmingly unsympathetic. Where either church can be locally self-supporting, that is, can organize and live without missionary aid, it may go without its advent being consistently antagonized. But the question of *expediency* should even then be patiently considered, and competitive occupancy conscientiously avoided

by both parties in the interest of peace, and lest we minister to unworthy prejudices. Self-denial for Christ's sake is wholesome.

Again, no good man deliberately proposes to do or defend a wrong, but not all perceive the danger lurking in the broad assertion of "our right as a church to go where we please." That is a question which neither church can honorably regard as a pending issue. Federation implies a league, a compact, an alliance. This certainly involves more than noninterference by the parties thereto, to each other's hurt. The entire plan of federation proceeds upon the idea approved by both General Conferences, that "where either church is doing the work expected of Methodism the other shall *not* organize" contrary to the spirit of the fraternal agreements—to observe which restriction all the bishops of both churches are now understood to be pledged. Hence, neither church is at liberty to go where it pleases in the sense that it is free to occupy any city, town, or community where the

other is already planted. Of course populations, resources, and needs are to be considered where cities are involved, but it is plain that the application of this rule would involve many difficulties.

It is to be regretted that many of our brethren South contend that our church has no right to be in the South at all. In this they are sincere. . . But now by mutual recognition both churches have become national in the same sense. Otherwise there had been no need of treaty regulation for joint territorial occupancy, and for our living and working side by side in fraternal cooperation.

Were ever treaty agreements more sacred in object or more imperative in demand for conscientious observance? It must be that God would not have had Methodism reorganized under the handicap of former antogonisms and trammeled for decades to come by internal conflicts. But now he has broken down the conventional walls that were built in contention, and whether we will it or no, we must learn to live and work together as

brethren. The North is in the South. The South is in the North. Both are in the West. The people are thus learning better things of each other than they had unfortunately too long believed. By and by we shall coalesce, and there will be but one Methodism. If it shall have several administrative jurisdictions, that will be for the sake of efficiency only, not to meet the political or social requirements of a past century.

The coming Greater Methodism will be facing forward, not backward. Its program will be prophetic, not reminiscent. The rosters of all its heroes will be merged into one. When the charge is sounded for that reunited host, no soldier will know whether it is the bugle of Asbury or McKendree, of Simpson or Pierce, of Randolph Foster or Alpheus Wilson, and the charge will be made over new ground, against a common foe. The prize of the battle will not be a faded plume, nor some rusted relic of fraternal strife, nor a massive cathedral, nor even a domed or spired city, but the flaming forth

of the day of the Lord upon the upturned faces of a redeemed and united Methodist people. May God speed the day of our complete reconciliation. But we can help to bring it near. *Our people want peace.* The love of God does not set brothers in battle array. Our covenants must be faithfully kept that confidence may grow. This means that leaders shall preach peace and not strife. Who doubts that the bishops, editors, and preachers can stop this Methodist warfare within five years, if they will?

To stop war we must first stop warlike talk. To stop warlike talk, brand it as treason to God and to the honor of both churches. Who does not understand that the influences now (May, 1914) fomenting suspicions between the nations and holding back disarmament and universal peace are the voices that speak for ambition and avarice? Such voices should be unheard in ecclesiastical parliaments and diplomacy. But, frankly, we know that churches do not quarrel just because a good Christian enjoys contention.

God's remedy for our case is an infallible specific, hitting every symptom. It is the *love* that *envieth not*, that *vaunteth not itself*, is not *puffed up*, that *seeketh not her own*, that *thinketh no evil*. Normal Christianity for our inward parts and Golden Rule diplomacy for our outward conduct, and our woes are past.

All we need be to each other is to be just what we profess—Christians and brothers. All we need to do is to do just what we have promised—behave ourselves as such. With all the world before us, and the unsaved millions calling to us, with a certainty that more than we gain in substance by war we lose in spiritual efficiency and self-respecting character, and with Christ's resistless drawing toward union, what does it signify whether a hundred new American societies, more or less, per year be enrolled in one wing or the other of our Methodism, as contrasted with the importance of our transcendent opportunity for world evangelism?

Here ends this reiteration of a plea made for "peace with honor"—by keeping treaty

faith—which was written three months before a broken treaty turned Europe into a continent of bloody horrors. Methodism also has been learning something of the deadly waste of bloodless warfare due to neglect of convenant obligations.

CHAPTER V

METHODIST EXPERIENCE IN REGULATING EVIL

CHARACTERISTICALLY, the attitude of Methodism toward all evils that curse society is prohibitive. We have had little patience with expediency or the plea of impracticability when reforms have been under discussion, but in dealing with the internal evils that beset Methodism we have been so handicapped by inherited conditions that we have accepted regulation as the one available recourse.

Following the opening up of fraternal relations between the two churches naturally came earnest efforts toward federation. Strong commissions were created to ascertain and, if possible, remove the causes of local friction, and provide against recurrence. Various measures suggested by the commissioners were adopted by the two

General Conferences. The Common Hymnal, Catechism, and Order of Service were hailed with joy; but while they offered a spectacular demonstration of nearer approach, the movement did not prove effective for peace. Cooperative relations in China, Korea, and other mission fields were not followed by an abatement of troubles in the home territory. When at last it became plain that joint occupancy of any Southern field meant competitive operations and constant irritations just as before, it was decided to establish a "Federal Council of Methodism," which, sitting as a court of arbitration, should have power to hear and finally determine all cases of conflict arising between representatives or congregations of the two churches; and all parties concerned were adjured by the General Conferences to respect the decisions of this judicial tribunal, which should consist of three bishops, three ministers, and three laymen from each church. The grave and delicate duty of conducting such arbitrational proceedings was assigned to the members of the already

existing Commissions on Federation. Thus a court of six bishops, six ministers, and six laymen was constituted. It will be readily seen that in entering upon this method of *finally* determining every individual case of dispute in the field by a joint tribunal, the Church South, actuated by the desire for harmony, in effect at least, surrendered its traditional claim to the exclusive occupancy of Southern territory—a concession of which sufficient account has not been made.

It is lamentably unfair to say that the Southern brethren have conceded nothing toward bringing about better relations. They were the first to propose and enact that this mixed Council should exercise final judgment where conflicting interests are involved —and they have stood to their pledge.

Theoretically, the plans for federation and arbitration were well conceived, and back of them was a sincere purpose; but it is in their application that all our methods must be tested. As early as 1910 the Joint Commission on Federation felt "compelled to

admit that results had not met the demand of the times nor the expectations of the people." The "concrete case" is a stubborn barrier to every gracious movement. The "far-flung battle line" of Methodism is manned by souls trained and sensitized to the long-roll call to "fall in," wherever there is a "falling out." They are not always amenable to long-distance suggestions from the council room of courteous commissioners who have been holding converse with God as well as with each other. They are in a different atmosphere. Somebody's "rights" have been invaded. What American can endure that? Blood is up, the battle joined, and the local mischief done—just as aforetime. Federation methods arrive too late to serve as a preventive. As a corrective they fail as a matter of course where the voice of Christ has already been lost in the din of conflict.

What next? The Federal Council—according to the treaty. Admirable in conception, it is only truth to say that it cannot communicate saving grace to human nature,

and that is the nature that embroils churches. But it must be said that in itself the Federal Council method of arbitration involves long delay, great expense, and ends in executive impotence—if the litigants are recalcitrant enough to civil law and uncivil law-suits over property issues. The Council has no funds to protect its decisions in the courts; and if it had, the State laws are not always made to conform to our church regulations as to titles and trusteeship.

Nor is it an easy undertaking to bring together eighteen busy men at a date convenient for all of them and hold them for days at a time, even for so important a duty. Again, the proceedings of such a court must be so orderly and the records required as a basis for their judgment so accurate and so full as to be reviewable if need be by the Civil Courts. To begin with, the Council could not go forward at all without rules of procedure for its own orderly government, as well as for the guidance of churches seeking its intervention. It required several years to formulate

such rules; meanwhile it became apparent that to hear all the complaints laid before the Council would necessitate perpetual sittings. Hence, in the absence of General Conference legislation providing for preliminary inquiries for the local sifting and settling of as many cases as possible, the Council had to insure its own efficiency by so framing its rules as to require that such preliminary hearings be had whenever possible. This made it absolutely necessary that careful records of these initial proceedings, including the evidence and pleadings in full, should be furnished to the Council. In order to supply actual needs no less than four copies must be prepared. These records and pleadings being voluminous, the expense of providing them becomes a very considerable item, taxable to the local church concerned.

Another factor in the process is time. Every appeal must be prosecuted with strict regard to the rights of the appellee. There must first be due notice; next, sufficient time to secure evidence, make answer, and

prepare pleadings; then more time for evidence, citations, and pleadings in rebuttal, and re-rebuttal, and copies of all these for both parties, as well as for the Council. Then, time for the Council to be called—subject to the existing engagements of eighteen men. Then more time for the hearing and transmission of the verdict. What happens meanwhile where the case originates is not taken into this account, but no one ever heard of a revival of scriptural holiness as incidental to such proceedings; and when a verdict is at last rendered, of what spiritual value is a peace thus attained? Is it peace or sullen acquiescence? (The Rules of Procedure are printed in the Appendix, page 171.)

Let not the reader dismiss this recital as irrelevant to unification. This involved, cumbersome, prolonged, and expensive process is the inevitable penalty of the present relations of these two sister churches. Forty years' experience in "fraternity" must prove something. What appears is (1) that these churches cannot live side by side

without ever recurring outbreaks of the denominational competitive consciousness; (2) that formal fraternity is but a first-aid recourse, not a remedy; and (3) that even compulsory federation gives little promise of better results than the festering of local sores to the point of incurability during tedious and expensive litigation, and the spread of the infection indefinitely.

Thus the fifty-years' war, rooted, as are all wars, in selfish competition, is left to go on. In this year of grace, while the oldest Christian nations are proving that the phrase "civilized warfare" is a tragic mismating of words, it is our shame that six million Methodists should add to the general chaos by confessing that "Fraternity" and "Federation" are also mere verbal illusions by which they have been deceiving themselves and the world as to their spiritual unity. Disillusionment cannot now be far ahead. Verbal diplomacy has its bounds. Will the next stage be straight war without regard to treaties, the fortifying of strategic points, then recrimination and reprisals, and

Methodist brotherhood left a byword for another generation? It is a soul-sickening outlook. When Paul found a law in *his* "members" warring against the law of his mind his extremity drove him to Christ. Will Methodism find her own peace in the Christ she preaches to men? Not if a partisan construction of legal "rights" is to exclude Christ and his teaching from the problem; not if either church is to act in the spirit of a commercial convention; not if the leaders who would rather carry spear and shield than wear the guerdon of the Kingdom are to dictate terms; not if either church is to seek first a vindication of its own past or present, or any partisan advantage for its people or their assumed interests. In short, if these two churches are to find Christ as their Peace and Peacemaker, they must come to him in God's way, not in any preconceived way of their own—just as both have so long preached to other offenders. And they must talk less against each other and pray more for each other. This happy transformation the preachers

can bring to pass if they will; and if they are fit to preach at all, they will.

But our experience with federation will prove of value if it has taught us (1) that between alienated brothers heart reconciliation is the divine cure, not such treaties as strangers make; (2) that the evil of family strife which we recognized as such when we sought to *regulate* it, is, like other evils, not to be extirpated by temporizing methods which give the evil a legal standing; and (3) that no family feud can be healed by deliberately planning to perpetuate it. Even leaving out of thought our undeniable and officially declared family relationship, and regarding ourselves only as two Christian churches placed side by side, does not avail to save our consistency. Our plight becomes even more humiliating as we think of the wrangling of our rival representatives in the presence of sinners to whom they are preaching the gospel of *forgiveness* and *reconciliation*, and of our tribal ambassadors who are "spreading scriptural holiness" under protection of treaty guards to keep them

safely apart! Our General Conferences deplore strife and forbid acts of unbrotherly aggression, but the churches *perpetuate antagonistic interests and influences* to maintain which remains a test of loyalty and service to the men who face each other in the field and sing "Sure I must fight if I would"—*win*, as a response to the General Conference duet, "Blest be the tie that binds"! And we call this Christianity in the twentieth century! Is it not more like a bold attempt to sanctify militarism as a peace propaganda? We may expect contention as long as these churches continue to accept war as the normal condition between them. Of course it will be strenuously denied on both sides that they do this. Peace declarations will be cited and treaties quoted; but it will remain true that every declaration of desire for harmony and every treaty in the interest of peace is a confession that the existing status is *not* one of peace. Nor can it be made to appear that either church has ever considered the words of Christ as applicable to itself under such

circumstances, so long as both voluntarily assume that this status must continue—at least until one or the other shall yield its contention, or both shall find grounds of expediency stronger than the voice of conscience or the appeals of their Christian brotherhood have yet proved to be. Is this the best that our religion and Methodist statesmanship can do to relieve a shameful and intolerable situation? May God save the General Conferences of both churches from all implacables and from counselors in whose vision properties and charters and dignities and offices and preachers' chances and historic ghosts loom larger than the cross of Christ and the law of love.

CHAPTER VI

UNIFICATION IN SOME FORM IMPERATIVE

If historic facts and scriptural teaching afford a safe ground of judgment, it must be now apparent that by every consideration to which Christians should respond these two churches are imperatively called upon to seek—and to seek until they find—a basis of union honorable to both, and one pleasing to God as well, because prayerfully designed in all its terms to secure the highest efficiency of our continental Methodism both at home and abroad. This is the rational and scriptural demand, and there is no other consistent course to follow. We must not only face the facts, but the responsibility for the facts being as they are.

Our church entered the South under revolutionary conditions growing out of

civil war, and in response to a call that at the time appealed to both patriotic and religious sentiment. We believe it to be unquestionably true that we have reached and saved many thousands of people whom our Southern brethren could no more have influenced, or recovered, than Northern preachers could have served Methodism in the South after 1844. The Church South seems to have been justified in a corresponding course in Maryland. We have gathered a large membership in the South. These members have their constitutional rights and place among us. We could not regard their relation to us, under these circumstances, as discreditable, even were it admitted that our fathers of the war period had erred in policy.

Our bishops, preachers, and teachers in the South are doing the work which pertains to their several offices. They did not formulate the policy of the Church. It is conceded that they are humanly as liable to err in judgment and spirit as other men, but it is to be fairly assumed that as a body they are doing God's work as they under-

stand it, and in the order of the church. Their presence is resented because of the view generally entertained by our Southern brethren as to the respective territorial rights of the two churches, under their construction of the "Plan of Separation," which, they contend, barred our church from the Southern territory occupied by the original church, and excluded them from Northern States previously occupied—the border Conferences being left to choose their place with either branch. The territory which was unoccupied by the original body at the time of separation is, in their view, open alike to both churches. Thus they consistently justify their presence in the far West and Northwest, while still denying our right to be in the original Southern territory. We have never resented their coming into the Northwest, either officially or otherwise. We have received their ministers courteously, and have treated them as brethren.

The problem of unification would be far easier to-day if our Southern brethren could

see with our eyes, for a little while, as impartially as it is our desire and purpose in these pages to see through theirs, the grievances that are keeping us apart. Neither church now seems to realize as vividly as both did in 1876 that a long and bitter civil war leaves behind it abnormal conditions of mind which record themselves in actions and words that carry the echo of guns and battle cries. Assuming fidelity to conviction as the basis of later judgment, even war antagonists may respect each other, and in time fall into happy comradeship. Then they no longer condemn each other for what either did in war times in soldierly fidelity to his country or his cause. With soldiers of the cross such magnanimity should be conspicuous. God is surely calling American Methodists just now to exemplify the gospel they preach and profess to practice. Brothers of the brave, generous-hearted South, can it be that we have so disastrously misunderstood each other, since the resumption of fraternal relations, in a matter so vital to peace as the *general* application of our

agreed principles of federation? Have we on our side been irrationally wrong in looking upon the fraternal negotiations which date from 1874—1876 as having their inception in the *post bellum* status, and as proceeding, therefore, *in recognition* of the *new* conditions brought about by the war, and without complications growing out of former misunderstanding? Were we not together seeking a basis of side-by-side amity everywhere under the changed conditions in which we found ourselves? If not, what need had we of treaty regulations such as those adopted? It seems obvious that our General Conference could not have constitutionally ratified any agreement by commissioners that would have virtually extinguished the membership of hundreds of ministers and many thousands of people. But if it was *not* contemplated that we should abandon our membership in the South, could it have been intended that they should be subjected to a regime of "fraternity" by which their presence there as representatives of our church would have

been virtually outlawed? In effect, is not this the only alternative conclusion unless our principles of federation are binding alike upon both churches, and in the South as elsewhere? These questions are intended neither as argument nor complaint. They simply place our Northern eyes at the disposal of our brethren of the South, that they may the better understand our spirit, while at the same time this probing to the core of one of our most vexing differences serves to illustrate a situation so difficult for human diplomacy as to make it plain that if the two churches are to look hopefully for a better future they must face Godward and not manward, forward and not backward, and hear above all other voices their one Lord, who comes walking upon our turbulent sea, bidding it be calm.

Methodism is not sinking, but it is in peril by reason of too much cargo that is contraband under the terms of its commission. With that overboard and the Master in command, we are safe. Face to face with him, it will be easier to realize

that the Sermon on the Mount, and all his kindred teachings, were not the dreams of a visionary, but were sane deliverances of the Son of God; that they are still in force in his church, and as binding upon any body of Christians as they are upon any individual disciple. Face to face with him, no one will question that the declarations made or sanctioned by the two General Conferences in reciprocal statements have the force and sanctity of treaties duly signed and officially published; that these agreements contained concessions and recognitions which place both churches upon an equal footing everywhere, North and South, and under equal duty as to further negotiations; and, that being true, that these negotiations should proceed from the point already attained, and not from the period of disruption—thus leaving what has been settled by these treaty agreements to stand unquestioned.

We are thus left free to consider pointedly the duty of unification, and the essential principles underlying the proposed plan.

Unifying churches is something different

from exchanging tangible values or forming a business partnership. If Methodism were a tract of land over which the claimants of undetermined interests had been disputing for half a century, it would be quite time to go to law and thus settle the rights of the contestants. But Methodism is neither real estate nor negotiable property in any sense or feature; it is recognized the world around, and best known as a great evangelistic movement, born of the Spirit of God in the eighteenth century, and from its birth claiming to be a special exponent of the saving power of Jesus Christ. Under this high claim have accrued to it all its resources, material, educational, and spiritual. How utterly incongruous it seems, therefore, for disagreeing beneficiaries or temporary trustees of Methodism to assume proprietary rights over such a sacred trust of divine influence and historic achievement, and proceed to deal in or deal with its accumulated assets as if they were owners, and personally concerned with dividends! Viewing the problem from the divine side, the first considera-

tion with every loyal soul will be, not past grievances nor traditional preferences, but the efficiency of Methodism as a power in the kingdom of our Lord. Its mission is to save and to serve. Which promises better results—unity and harmony or division and discord? Are the separated bodies of Methodism now faithfully representing the normal apostolic church with its one body, one spirit, one faith, one baptism? Or, coming still closer to the issue, does our divided Episcopal Methodism fairly express to the world the saving grace of Jesus Christ? Our answer must be that, on the contrary, these two Methodisms, among all ecclesiastical bodies of to-day, present the most conspicuous example of perverse persistency in perpetuating strife where unity should prevail. Here we are, confessedly one great but divided family of Christians, of one national allegiance, of the same spiritual lineage, the same ecclesiastical antecedents, preaching the same doctrines, holding the same experimental test of spiritual regeneration, singing the same hymns, teaching

the same catechism, accepting each other's ministers and members without question, even with gladness, and inspired by the same examples of heroic achievement, with governmental lines almost identical, structurally and administratively, and both busying ourselves about the Lord's work; but doing everything except what should be for his dear sake the first thing, namely, putting away strife, and joining hearts and hands in constructing the mightiest battle line for evangelistic conquest the world could look upon in this age. It is humiliatingly true that American Episcopal Methodism is not faithfully representing Jesus Christ to the world.

It is passing strange how both churches could trust their ecclesiastically inexperienced converts of Japan to unite, expecting them to live together in brotherly love, but dare not manifest any such degree of confidence in American Methodists; that having combined schools and publishing interests, and coordinated missionary work in China and Korea, Mexico and South America, for

economy's sake, and that the gospel be not blamed, we balk before all such practical fellowships and economies where our own long-seasoned Methodist preachers and people in America are concerned, and where the waste and hurt of division are so much greater, to say nothing of the confusing of our Oriental converts by this behavior at home. And yet these two churches have certified each to the other, and both for both, that they are both legitimate branches of the original Methodism in America, and both "apostolic churches"—"equally apostolic." That is the certificate of character they have voted to each other and to themselves—apostolicity and legitimacy: as related to original Methodism, both legitimate; as related to Jesus Christ, equally apostolic. Dare we add—*and about equally distant from each other?*

But is it apostolic to contend for advantage or supremacy the one over the other, anywhere or at any time? The Master did not so judge when the twelve debated the question of which should be greatest. Paul did

boast that he had withstood Peter to the face "because he was to blame"—but that was for dissimulation and temporizing in a serious matter. With his bluntness he might rebuke Methodism for that identical offense to-day. Surely, Peter was not referring to that incident when he said that Brother Paul had written "some things hard to be understood." The proof of their apostleship, however, was not in such episodes of temporary divergence, but in their consistent witness to the saving grace, and their loyalty to the death to the authority of their acknowledged Lord and Saviour.

It ought not to require argument to show that an apostolic church will obey Jesus Christ. And who will undertake to prove that to obey Jesus Christ would injure a church, any more than obedience to him would injure a man? The chief discouragement in the outlook for unification to-day is that the most distinctive teachings and commands of our divine Lord are forgotten or ignored in the din of this family strife. Alas, it is not preposterous to ask, Do these

two Episcopal Methodist apostolic churches recognize the authority of their acknowledged Lord, or do they not? If they do, by what words of his do they justify their present relations? And if all their preachers and people and properties and institutions really belong to him—as is solemnly avowed—why should the first question in considering any proposed plan of union be, "What will the plan give to us and what to them?" That is, Which side will have the better in the *bargaining?* It does seem as if these two apostolic bodies should be asking, rather, "What will our Lord receive by the arrangement? What advantage will accrue to his kingdom? What waste will be avoided? What increase of power and efficiency to his gospel and its influence among men may be expected?" Is that test too severe for our type of apostolicity? Does it overstrain our Methodist legitimacy? Let us look a little more carefully into the inconsistency of our present attitude.

We may best perceive this in the light of a pertinent concrete illustration.

There is one vital question which neither Kaiser, nor Czar, nor King, nor President, nor the Parliaments that vote soldiers and munitions of war for their contending hosts can ever silence. In the warm blood of a million victims of an unholy war that question is already written on the sky where all the world is reading it. Every man and woman who prays knows that God will require an answer to that question. That question is this: Is there one basis of righteousness for the individual subject and a fundamentally different standard of behavior for the king? Is there one code of ethics for men, and another for governments and nations—which are but aggregations of men? The answer to that question holds the peace of the world and all the highest values of civilization. There is but one answer, unless the righteousness of God is to be impeached. It is what God *is* that gives force and sanctity to his requirements of men. By the same token nations must be just and honest, and truthful, and neighborly, and faithful to treaties. Neither monarchs, nor

Parliaments, nor Presidents, nor councils, can justify themselves in treachery and pillage, and devastation, and slaughter, by any pretext that will not stand the test if applied to individual conduct. The conscience of the world says this to-day, and the Church of God dares not say less. This fundamental principle of divine ethics before the century is half done will be the law of nations.

But before the churches assume to condemn human governments for their failures at this point, let them remember (1) that nations do not profess to exemplify perfect ethical standards as do the churches, and (2) that with what judgment the churches judge rulers and nations for their violation of accepted standards of behavior they are inevitably meting out judgment to themselves.

Just now their verdict against the warring nations of Europe is reacting with such force that neither popes, nor cardinals, nor archbishops, nor bishops, nor district superintendents, nor presiding elders, nor preachers,

nor General Conferences, nor Assemblies, nor Synods can avert the self-pronounced condemnation. Nor can all our diplomats, editors, or professors construct a defense. *The Church of Christ is untrue to the ethical principles which she is seeking to enforce upon human governments.* Every man who prays knows that God will also require of his church to answer whether there is one law for the individual Christian, and a different law for organized bodies of Christians—one law for the disciple, and another for the *church that assumes to be his teacher in morals.* To this question, also, there can be but one answer, and that answer is, that every corporate aggregation of Christians, calling itself a church, must in all its behavior toward other bodies of Christians be as sincere and truthful, as considerate and forgiving, as obedient to the law of love, as unselfish in its spirit, as ready to return good for evil, as the individual disciple is required to be. How can the church, or any branch of the church, which teaches the cardinal virtues that are set forth in the Sermon on the Mount, any

church which proclaims as its chief Corner Stone the Divine Man who exemplified all these virtues in their uttermost demonstration, escape the imputation of shameless ethical apostasy, when it is constantly discrediting its own evangel by an attitude of jealousy and partisan self-love toward other bodies of disciples? Wherein does denominational partisanship that resorts to diplomatic contentions and shrewd strategies to forestall a rival denomination display a holy ambition? That "all denominations do it" does not change the word of God, nor heal the broken law of love.

The bane of our denominationalism in America—Methodism included—is the spirit of self-aggrandizement. We do not yet seem to understand how love of self benumbs the faith of the prophet, and paralyzes both his tongue and his vision. We do not yet seem to realize that a mingled motive means a mangled message. What possible word or plea of Divine authority has the church for nations at war until she herself owns the higher law of God, abandons carnal-mind

diplomacy and submits her own internal controversies to the arbitration of Christ and John and Paul? How dare she speak to kings of mediation? We easily explain the impotency of the pope's appeal to Catholic nations to be at peace among themselves. We simply ask, When did the Vatican arbitrate any contention with anybody? We perceive that its very plea for conciliation is an anathema upon its own history and its own unrepented apostasy from the higher law of the kingdom of Christ.

But no less impotent than the pope's appeal is the united voice of twentieth-century Protestantism against all war, and in favor of international arbitration. Where is *our Protestant* Hague? Where is our tribunal for the settlement of interdenominational controversies over territorial "invasions" and rights of precedence in occupation? Where is our Methodist Palace of Peace? Two great General Conferences spent forty years and a lot of money and sentiment in building one, known as the Federal Council of

Methodism, but the first attempt to use it spread a local controversy over a continent. It simply proved that the whole head was sick and the whole heart of American Methodism faint from the long-burning fever of family strife. Only the Spirit of God and the brooding presence of the long-since reconciled leaders of last-century Methodism saved our peace palace from wreck. For the time, at least, it is like the international Hague—out of service.

And to think that Methodists were the first denomination to create such a tribunal! It was a distinction to be coveted. But if Methodism with its standard of Christian life and experience, reaching to perfection in love, cannot make such a court of arbitration available for family peace, what hope is there for interdenominational or world peace by arbitration? Even these two sister Methodisms are proving that bloodshed only deepens the abysses dug by human contentions.

But until the church shall become Christian let no man say that Christianity has

failed with the nations. The church has failed to express Christianity. Christianity will not succeed with nations until it succeeds with the church. Ecclesiastical greed and denominational strife—the words are used advisedly—have obscured the vision of the Christ. In the early church, which did recognize the spiritual canonicity of the Sermon on the Mount, when flames and wild beasts devoured exultant Christian martyrs, the truth was glorified. Under the secularized and militarized ecclesiasticism of nominally Christian modern governments, conscripted martyrs carry the flame and blood lust against other conscripted martyrs and they butcher each other in the name of God and native land. The chorus "Onward, Christian Soldiers," is sung in deadly discord to the accompaniment of ringing steel and crashing volley and thundering cannon, till smothered in clouds of poisonous gases, while in every language of Europe, princes and statesmen, preachers and teachers, philosophers, artisans, and peasants, heartbroken women and starving children fill the

heavens with battling tempests of prayer which even the compassion of a pitying God cannot translate into "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done"!

But here again the church must rebuke with much hesitation and restraint until she herself can read her own charter without blushing for her offenses against its supreme law of love. And why talk of the fearful waste of men and money in the wars of the world, while in the holy crusade of the church against sin and selfishness so many millions of consecrated dollars and so many thousands of men and women are devoted, not to *overcoming* denominational friction in the field but to *making good its losses*, and actually, to *multiplying points of conflict* which must inevitably entail more waste and greater losses! We have become so accustomed to the clatter of our ecclesiastical machinery that we fancy it is registering spiritual victories when better hearing would detect a creaking protest against culpably incompetent engineering. To be sure, we must take things as we find

them; but why take them at all if we are to leave them as we found them? As matters are going now we are giving the world no lessons in Christian economics, nor are we commending spiritual treatment for its fevers of war. Yet "the field is the world."

How far are these two churches responsible for such misuse of means? That cannot be answered in words and figures. We get but a hint from the record of appropriations of money, though it means much to say that *since fraternal relations were established* between the two Episcopal Methodisms, our *official* appropriations alone for use in the Southern States have gone beyond two and a quarter millions of dollars! This does not include the colored Conferences, nor does it cover the white school work, nor the solicited special gifts to churches and schools—which would probably double the sum. In not so large a way, but in a correspondingly questionable way, the Church South has been spending money in the far North. It is not claimed that this vast amount of money has all been wasted.

Doubtless our presence in the South has stimulated home missionary operations in the sister church, and we have gathered many people who might not have been otherwise reached. Yet, outside of East Tennessee, Missouri, and a few Northern settlements farther South, our progress has been very far from encouraging. Looking at the matter even from a selfish denominational standpoint, we should have had far larger returns, in the long run, had we invested three fourths of this great sum in wide-open fields in the West and in our Northern cities among the foreign-born multitudes who are battering down the safeguards of our American civilization. Our sister church could also have used its funds more profitably elsewhere.

But we do not compass the main argument from waste of resources until we take account of the incessant turmoil and distraction due to past and present methods in both churches —for, after all, the most serious waste is the *loss of spiritual values*, not alone in the aggregate of spiritual results, but in their quality

as well. There is a certain spiritual fineness that is of infinite significance in the soul life which is inevitably depreciated by the alloy of a partisan element in Christian experience. No type of churchism, no form of Methodism, that obstructs the clear, loving, sympathetic vision of the soul in any direction, by any veil that Christ would not wear when looking that way, can be serving its highest end. Where shall we look for our Father's image if not in the faces of his other children? When jealousies and bitterness supply the lenses through which those of the same household of faith see each other, how souls are coarsened, how quickly their sensitiveness to other phases of evil is impaired, and how at last their vision of God is blurred by the blemish in their own sight. It is here affirmed as beyond question that the internal dissensions of Episcopal Methodism have tended constantly to depreciate the quality and influence of its ministry, to lower the tone of its pulpit ministrations, to dull spiritual desire among the laity, to create doubt as to the efficacy

of the new birth, and, in general, to devitalize the message of Methodism to the world. The process is plain. First, the blighting effect of such familiar dissensions upon the individual soul-life of the people; and, secondly, the long-continued exhibition of glaring inconsistency between doctrine and practice, as exemplified in their attitude of mutual distrust, discredits either their creed, or their sincerity, in the public mind. Thus these churches have suffered for at least forty years both in their spiritual product and as exponents of evangelistic efficiency.

Consider now another aspect of the case. Yielding as we have done to the spirit of the old sectional feud, we have neglected the real missionary opportunities which God has laid at our very doors. Our home mission treasuries are sadly inadequate to this demand were all their revenue given to the spiritual rescue of our immigrant population. These new and unassimilated Americans are so colonized in cities and districts as to be readily accessible. They offer a clearly defined, nearby missionary field, with

a distinct patriotic appeal that is almost utterly wanting in our rival approaches to native American populations. It is enough to startle our consciences when we reflect that every thousand dollars these two churches have expended in supporting two Methodist churches where one would do better work for the Master, would have sent a warm-hearted preacher and friend to tell these stranger people among us of the soul liberty that it has been the mission of Methodism to proclaim. Have we been better serving God and country by duplicating service to our own countrymen? Make a study of some single people—the two millions of Polish immigrants, for example: a wronged people seeking escape and refuge in America; an earnest people, intellectually alert and hungry; a soul-starved people; a thrifty people reported as holding several hundred millions of dollars' worth of American property already, and drifting from the cities landward, large numbers of them in revolt against their hereditary ecclesiastical teaching, and for whom Protestantism is doing

comparatively nothing. What a call in their behalf the Master is sounding! We have a few workers among them where we should have hundreds. This case is simply illustrative. Once Methodism would have exulted in such an opportunity so near at hand. While we wonder at the ever-increasing cost of evangelistic work among our own people, we may well consider whether we can save ourselves and our own at all unless we save the strangers sent of God to our very doors without cost to us. He will see that we have no lack of men or money when we prove as churches that we know how to use both for his glory, to the exclusion of our own vanity. It is high time to consecrate the cost of its indulgence.

If there is to Methodists any sacredness in the value of their evangelistic appeal to the world; if there be any delights and rewards in family peace; if they covet as Methodists ought the highest type of pulpit and pastoral effectiveness, and a purer spirituality in their own religious aim and experience; if they would promote national

unity and world peace by example as well as by precept; if they would prove themselves faithful stewards of their Lord's money by economy in its application; if they would more helpfully respond to the deplorable conditions of our own and immigrant populations; if for the sake of their teaching relation to childhood and their exemplary relation to human brotherhood they would by conduct as well as precept set forward the higher law of love; in short, if they would make Methodism "Christianity in earnest," Christianity in action, Christianity in *demonstration*, then they must—they *simply must* merge their vows, their fealties, their fellowships, their agencies, their resources for conquest, their prayers, their plans, their aims, their hopes, and their destiny.

One great heart-rally about the cross, and the burdens of our past will roll away, and the shame of our Lord because of our strife be removed forever. Master! Master! give us thy peace!

CHAPTER VII

WHAT AND HOW SHALL WE BUILD?

THIS chapter deals with principles rather than details. It was assumed in the outset and has been consistently maintained thus far in these pages that God only can lead these churches out of their entanglements, and that where divine promptings and leadings are so dominant a factor no one man should venture to map out in detail beforehand their march from the wilderness into the land of promise.

Such an undertaking is not necessarily irreverent in spirit, but it is manifestly calculated to provoke an indiscriminate discussion by hundreds of writers, from as many personal angles of vision and with no practical outcome except general distraction of thought—*and the obscuring of the divine imperative back of the whole movement.* Our fathers have settled their accounts with

God. We have ours to settle now or later. What we owe him we cannot pay by debating his claims, but by doing his will as he may reveal it from day to day. First, let the actual negotiations between chosen ambassadors proceed in his presence. After their work is done it will be ours to discuss. This does not imply that the rest of us should not meanwhile think or speak our sentiments in regard to the common interest. We certainly should be free to talk or write *in line with our prayers;* but if we call God to preside over our councils, it would seem orderly to first address the Presiding Spirit, and then speak in his presence weighty words of conviction as to the *main issue—the Conforming of our Organic Church Life and Activities to the Law and Spirit of Christ that we may better Serve His Kingdom.*

This supreme purpose will be the only rule needed in á divinely conducted parliament of the people. It will exclude all irrelevant allusions and much misplaced emphasis. Through all the years these churches have prayed too little for each

other and talked too much in criticism of each other. Surely, it will be better at this crisis to increase prayer and abandon criticism for charity in judgment. BROTHERS, OUR FATHER IS TRUSTING US AT A GREAT EPOCH IN THE AFFAIRS OF HIS KINGDOM. LET US NOT FAIL HIM.

But since we are to be actors, not dreamers, we must get the measure of our part of the task. God gives us the spirit of work and will give us the right spirit in work which he appoints for us, but he does not do *our* work. When we build our houses we take his prepared material and build by his laws. We do not venture to set aside gravitation nor dare to invert architectural order. We follow his lines. Working with human material we have more complicated problems, but are still guided by his laws as revealed in the book of experience as well as his written Word. In the spiritual domain we are especially dependent on revelation and his direct personal influence, as the history of man attests. But through these avenues, radiantly lighted by the life and teachings

of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word, we have received laws of conduct based on eternal principles which are as unchangeable as the law of gravitation. These principles, if long ago applied, would have made American Methodism a far greater blessing to the country and to the world than it has been, great as has been its service.

Called now, as we certainly are, to construct a new program for to-day and the future, dare we longer ignore those principles upon which the throne of the universe rests? Let us meditate together on these foundations of our faith: God is love. The breath of holiness is love. The heart of truth is love. The seed of justice is love. The atmosphere of heaven is love. The only power that can lift mankind is love. The only solvent for human ills and woes is love. The only salvation is through forgiveness of sin by love, and then its complete conquest by love. Love is the wooing voice of the infinite wisdom. To cast away love is high treason against every attribute of God and every hope of man. This is not cant. These

are not platitudes. These are the cardinal truths of spiritual Christianity. They inspire all true worship. They are the music of the soul in tune with God. They are the notes that saints and angels sing.

But—ecclesiastical contentions do not begin or continue in love. Arising in strife about "nonessentials," they continue in envy, jealousy, and selfish propagandism.

Denominational ambition that leads to these sinful exhibitions is inimical to love. The Scriptures speak of the church as the body of Christ, and as his bride. These are close-fitting figures. Think of the body of Christ having warring members, or disobeying his will. Think of the Bride of Christ giving ear to the seductive voice of vain-glorious selfhood.

What shall we build? Methodism claims that Christ gave no specific directions for church organization, but left his church free to adapt its organic form to its environment and its age; but no Methodist dares to intimate that this liberty gave license for such a dual body as Episcopal Methodism wears

to-day. We are like the Siamese twins, one in parentage and birth, bound together by a historical and doctrinal ligament we cannot break, inseparable sharers of the one vital current, but with two bodies, two hearts, two wills; conscious of a mission essentially mutual and identical but working by methods independent and uncoordinated, and so often disagreeing and clashing in our rival plans as to make our hereditary bond of twin brotherhood the conspicuous advertiser of our unnatural alienation.

The ligament that binds us cannot be cut. We must become one in aim and destiny, But how? Evidently, there is but one way, and that is through reorganization. But on what basis?

Shall we make the old feud our corner stone and start with the contention of 1844, or shall we work by the fundamental rules of the divine architecture and build on the chief Corner Stone, Jesus Christ? If it is to be a church—a living church of the living God—we must build upon the living Christ. After partisan leaders have stopped digging

into soldiers' graves for political ammunition, it is no time for church leaders to be stirring the ashes of the fathers to find live embers of controversy. As God's immortals with our faces toward the future we must build for to-morrow.

It cannot be the part of Christian statesmanship to set expert historical accountants to the task of determining just who was to blame in 1844, or 1848, and how much, and giving us a balance-sheet of debits and credits of culpability, as a starting point for Methodist unification. We have never known a family disagreement to be settled in that way. Our reconciliation with God did not come in that fashion. Our sins and errors went behind his back or into the depths of the sea. It was the *unjust* steward who, being freely forgiven by his Lord, exacted the last penny from his debtors. Nor can we set much value on diplomacy in such a matter as that before us. Diplomacy is not a peace-*maker*, but a peace-patcher. For proof, look at Europe to-day. Love is the only peace-*maker*. For the cure

of chronic alienations, Christ-lighted eyes and outstretched hands beat all the legal debaters and precedent experts to a happy outcome.

The one open way to unification is through such a reorganization of the separated communions of Methodism as shall constitute them one great organic entity, so equitably planned that every part can be utterly loyal to the whole body, and the whole best serve its mission by protecting and fostering every part. It would be profane folly to project any less majestic structure on our chosen chief Corner Stone. Love must cement every joint and hold every stone in place. Is this practicable? The answer depends solely on the sincerity of our devotion to Jesus Christ, and our loyalty to the foundations on which heaven and our hopes of salvation rest.

What are the conditions to be met? The Methodist Episcopal Church contains about half the Methodists in the United States. Any plan of direct union with any one of the smaller bodies implies its practical ab-

sorption, with loss of its identity. American constituencies are slow to surrender normal rights. They will naturally ask some form of protection against adverse discrimination in the legislation and administration of the united church. Very naturally their ideas of equitable government are suggested by the model offered by our national government. What constitutes a fairly representative government? Taking our national constitution as our guide, we would all agree that it means a government having its power from the people governed, its policies determined by the will of the majority as expressed in a free ballot, under constitutional provisions that give adequate protection to the minority. But for such constitutional checks and guards popular government might at any crisis take on the reckless temper of a craze-driven populace. By equal representation in the Senate the smaller States of the Union have their legislative check on the large and powerful States. In the courts the weakest minority may defend its cause, and one man may challenge any unwarranted act of the

national government itself. These distinctively American principles must be admitted if we are to build equitably in the reorganization of Methodism. Is the Methodist Episcopal Church ready to propose to the smaller Methodist bodies a plan of reconstruction that would protect them against its overwhelming majority? Such a concession, so far from being a surrender to the weaker body—"a capitulation"—would be the highest possible expression of real greatness. This, first, because it is Golden Rule equity; next, because it would lift the whole movement for union on our part, above the suspicion of ambitious worldly expediency to the high plane of loving obedience to the Spirit of Christ. Remember! "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." "Love seeketh not her own." Can we rise to the level of our religion? If not, let us quit preaching it, and preach practical selfishness as better for souls. We must give souls the best.

The Methodist Episcopal Church owes it to God to prove herself worthy of the

favor he has shown her. Is she now great enough to give to other divided communions which, like our Methodisms, hold in common the essentials of unity, the inspiration of a great example? Or will she insist that, as a condition of union, the other Methodist bodies, so often invited to consider terms, must, if they come, pass under the domination of her numerical majority? That, in essence, is the crucial question that is now upon us, testing the quality of our purpose in seeking to unite Methodism. We may hide it from the sight of our people under obscuring appeals to sectional prejudice or selfish denominational pride, but such a course would seem like a miserable confession that we have been seeking an increase of power under the pretext of a holy impulse. Our sole aim should be increased efficiency in God's work, and for that we must have a union in which every constituent part shall feel that its local efficiency in winning souls is fully guaranteed under the connectional government. How shall we build? Our prob-

lem is one of reconstruction. We are not left groping. Methodism is just now where the country would have been had the Confederacy succeeded. We should then have had two governments at least, with divergent interests, and no end of friction along the border. It was the dread of this prospective endless confusion and conflict—with South America as an example—that made the Union the great war cry of the Civil War, and held the North together during the dark days of repeated defeats. The war was not waged to destroy slavery but to "Save the Union." Where now, North or South, is there a sane citizen who does not rejoice that the nation escaped the perils of disunion even at such awful cost? With many more States and State governments than before, we now have a more compact union. But we have had also a very pertinent lesson as to *the best way to reunite a divided people.*

At the close of the Civil War the government tried at first a method of political reconstruction backed by military force.

That dismal chapter of American history is now read alike by both North and South. Reconstruction finally came, not by military compulsion, but through a far more effective method. The *main question having been settled, that the American people were to be one nation, and not two or more,* the people of the restored States were ultimately allowed to resume their normal status of autonomous government under the amended national constitution, on equal footing with their sister states. Through whatever bitter experiences and over whatever raging political antagonisms this result was realized, it is perfectly plain now that all the evil prophecies of partisan politics and all the dismal forebodings of timid theorists have failed, and that Southern American loyalty has responded to Northern American confidence, as is evidenced by the indisputable fact that we have now a genuine union of States, guaranteed by a union of American hearts, all true to the one flag, and all, whether of the North or South, the East or the West, sharers alike in the augmented power and

marvelous prosperity of the forever united American republic.

Thus God makes a mighty nation when he has his way with the people; and so he will make of our divided Methodism a mighty church if he can have his way with alienated Methodists. The road to reconstruction on a solid basis is plainly marked out by a historical precedent. Let us fairly try the call of brotherhood. And in this business brotherhood means simply *an equal chance under a fairly balanced government.*

Referring now to the outline Plan proposed by the General Conference of the Church South, it is to be observed, first, that it comes from a church of two millions of members to one of nearly double that number. But the smaller body is a strong, commanding, and rapidly growing church, with every indication favorable to its continued advance in numbers and influence. Its footing is firm and sure in all its original territory. It is to be remembered, next, that repeated advances looking to the union of these two churches have been made by

the larger church. There is quite enough in these two facts to justify the self-respecting, and yet fraternal attitude of the smaller, as illustrated in the form of unification proposed by its General Conference. It is but fair, therefore, to assume that the Church South has been actuated by a sincere desire to meet our advances in a spirit of candor and fairness, and in the earnest hope of thus ending an "intolerable situation" in a consistent way, and the only possible Christian way after our unsatisfactory experience with federation.

As to the form of unification proposed, there is much difference of opinion. Some are disposed to regard the proposition as a plan for further division, and ending in four churches instead of one. But is that a valid criticism? Think of the unity and compactness of our national government, which is composed of twelve times as many autonomous units as there would be under the proposed plan for reunited Methodism. Not one of the States would consent to merge its statehood in the national government,

yet the honor and strength and future greatness of the republic depend absolutely on the loyalty of these autonomous States to the federal constitution.

Furthermore, it may appear on reflection that what is aimed at in the Quadrennial Conference feature of the plan is, first, a method of securing the same end in representative government, namely, the protection of minorities against unfriendly legislation, that is met by the United States Senate, where the States are equally represented. The Quadrennial Conferences would have *equal* representation in the upper house of General Conference. The lower house would be constituted and elected in the same way as our present General Conferences are. No legislation could be passed without the concurrence of both.

Turning now to the question of autonomy for the proposed Quadrennial Conferences, there naturally recurs the analogy of the relation of the individual States to our national government. The States united constitute the power and majesty of the

nation. The nation becomes the voice and the protection of the States. The fidelity of the State to the general government is a direct contribution to its own welfare and defense. The general effect of this mutuality is most wholesome on both parties to the covenant. A formidable religious faction, or political schism, or unassimilated alien population may endanger a State, but it cannot imperil the power that guarantees the safety of that State, and the rights of its people as American citizens. On the other hand, so overwhelming is the power of the nation as compared with a State that any State would be helpless against adverse national administration but for constitutional guarantees that protect its integrity and freedom. All such desirable safeguards are worth writing into the constitutional pact of any great body of people organizing under a representative form of government. To bring the matter nearer home, we need only think of the commotion that would attend any attempt to take away from the local church or the Annual Conference the control of its own affairs, or to

abolish the constitutional protections thrown about Conference membership or church membership. If any valid reason can be urged against autonomy for vastly larger areas or jurisdictions, from the American standpoint, it has not yet appeared.

In thinking the question over, let us not forget what we are trying to do. Not to enlarge the Methodist Episcopal Church, not to achieve the conquest of sister Methodist churches by diplomacy or otherwise, not to convince them of the superiority of our methods—but to prepare the way of the Lord by removing barriers to his progress, and so making straight his path to the hearts and lives of men. If we build in this spirit, expediential regulations will not embarrass the workmen seriously.

What we have now is division, and in its very worst manifestation. What seems within reach is unity, not by absorption, but by organic coordination of now clashing factors of efficiency. To substitute peace for contention, confidence for suspicion, concentration for scatteration, and scriptural

consistency for unscriptural rivalry between two or more great Christian families which have been contentiously trying to spread scriptural holiness, even though attained through unification by mutual accommodation, which is Christian, would not be in any fair sense "unification by division."

What shall we build? An organism permeated through and through with the spirit of the religion it is to *exemplify* as well as to teach. Such a spirit will construct a fit body, and an adequate, safe, and satisfying governmental sanctuary.

But some one will say: "Come down from the clouds. The church must deal with earthly things and values. What about church property?" If there is any strife more bitter and defiant of decency than church strife it is a family quarrel over the division of the family estate. Unhappily, what we have in American Methodism is a combination of the two. Our contention ever since the Civil War has been about what? The bald answer is—"*Territory*"—land rights and privileges. "Our rights" and our

"mission" on one side, and "invasion" on the other. True, we have had to observe the civil laws in the acquisition and sale of real estate, and we have had to be buyers and exchangers of material values, and it is not to be wondered at that we have become possessed also of a proprietary consciousness. But who is the real owner of these great properties? If we have not been deceiving the tax collector and the public, every foot of land, every structure of marble, brick, or wood, every endowment and investment, standing in the name of either corporate body, belongs to God. Not one foot of ground, not one dollar of endowment, not one stone of any church building belongs to any bishop, preacher, layman, or society. That simplifies the property question. Plainly, it is not a matter of *original equities* under civil law, but one of *prospective utilities* under the divine direction. It is a question of sane, faithful, honest stewardship. "Lo, there thou hast that is thine" will not cover responsibility where the steward has been denominationally spec-

ulating with the Lord's money and wasted it, any more than where he has buried it in some napkin of neglect or decay or in munitions of strife. "What would we turn over to them?" Nothing. "What would they turn over to us?" Nothing. But as incorporated trustees or stewards what would we do? Look to our trust under the instructions of our Principal. He will forgive mistakes but not condone willful waste. The civil law will help us to reconstruct with much less expense than were the process reversed. All we want is the *will* to do what is for our Lord's interest and honor. Charters can be amended. Schools can be consolidated. Benevolent boards can be coordinated. Technical tangles are easily managed if parties concerned are of one mind as to the outcome. Let us not conjure up any more legal lions than faith in each other can reduce to harmlessness. "Vested rights?" God's are the oldest. He recognizes all that have been created under his name and for his glory. We will do the same conscientiously. Publishing interests? Easily readjusted for future

service and better service. All the batteries would fire in the same direction.

Unification gives no sheep over to the wolves, nor any property to the bats. It simply merges the capital, the opportunities and efficiencies which God has intrusted to these "equally apostolic" and legitimate Methodist Churches, so that all that is unseemly shall disappear and all their good be multiplied.

If, in the face of a purpose so consistent, some of us must still think of equities in what does not belong to any of us, and are still disturbed lest God be cheated, we might find relief in the fact that either church would turn into the united capital vastly greater values than either would surrender in the territory now chiefly occupied by the other.

In concluding this chapter no individual opinion could be of equal value with the deliberate declaration of the representative leaders of these two churches in the city of Chattanooga. The district superintendent of our church, the presiding elder of the Church South, all the pastors of both churches, and

leading laymen from both bodies, being in consultation, adopted the following statements, which came to the joint meeting of the commissioners in February, 1911:

[We omit their suggested details of organization which for reasons given at the opening of the chapter do not fall under its plan.]

"Our observation of the situation in East Tennessee convinces us that during these past years, but for the presence of both denominations in this territory, many would have been lost to Methodism. The radical differences in sentiment responsible for this situation have been gradually modified, the spirit of fraternity has grown, and in spite of the competition which has necessarily arisen, the two churches are generally laboring together in peace and harmony. Under these conditions one church could now clearly best serve the interest of Methodism. The people in both churches, while unswervingly loyal to their respective denominations, would, we believe, welcome reunion. Practical experience has demonstrated the difficulty, if not impossibility, of securing the

removal of one church from a given community where it is once established, even though all concerned recognize that one society would serve that particular community more effectively than would two. A federation commission, with full power to remove one denomination, would still cause friction where that church—the church of the choice of many people—would be represented in the general section. For these and other reasons we favor the complete unification of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church through reorganization into the Methodist Church.

"The purposes sought in this reorganization should be the elimination of existing competition and unnecessary duplication in all local fields, and the development of such unity of spirit in American Methodism as a whole as will most effectively advance the cause of evangelism at home and abroad, of education, and of civic righteousness."

CHAPTER VIII

WHAT OF THE NEGRO?

BETWEEN the old trenches so long held by the two churches there must be some sunny spot where God, the Father of all races, waits to preside over a brotherly peace conference in which would be discussed not our past contentions over the Negro but our joint duty toward him to-day. Both parties really desire to befriend him. If, as an opening proposition, they could just agree that slavery is dead and has been dead so long that it is neither religious nor patriotic, nor even decent, for Methodism to be still marching around the remains holding its bisectional nose while refusing burial to the corpse, they would at least feel a sense of relief. Better still, they would at once be free to face their greatest living problem—for, though slavery is dead, the Negro is still alive pleading valid gospel claims on both churches. What if,

after all the weary years of strife through misunderstanding of each other's real spirit, these two churches should now begin to pray and plan toward a united program for the Negro? That would have been the Christian method from the start, and therefore, the sane method, but neither church was in the mood for cooperation during those years of trouble.

Just here we shall for once get ahead by looking backward a little while. Poor as the Civil War left the Southern churches, they did not deliberately abandon the freed men. For a time master and servant suffered together, but before their new status had found its economic adjustment and the Southern churches could face the vastly changed racial conditions, the North had taken the Negro problem from their hands—the government by enfranchising the freedmen, and the Northern churches by a corresponding educational propaganda which, while wholly commendable in spirit, was sadly misinterpreted for many years by the people of the South—a misconception readily

accounted for by their bitter and humiliating experiences during the years of political reconstruction. Many sad, sad chapters were written into the history of the republic while the wreckage of war was being cleared away And no other misfortune of those lamentable years carried into the future more calamitous sequences of evil for both races than did the untimely severance of sympathetic relations between the old-time masters and their former slaves. This was, for both races, the tragedy of the reconstruction period. While the whites were still facing ruin and chaos the Negroes were beginning to dream of the impossible. Years and necessity have served to restore a rational recognition of their interdependence, and their relations are slowly but surely improving. But the effect of their alienation on the policies of the two Methodisms was sadly disastrous. We of the North felt that we were called to establish a kind of protectorate over the freedmen under conditions which implied, in effect at least, an assumption that we were his best, and for the time

his only friends. This attitude the impoverished Southern churches were not in position to controvert by any practical countermovement, even had the racial confusion resulting from the political manipulation of the Negro vote and legislators left them inclined to such a demonstration. Thus the anti-war strain between the Northern and Southern churches was intensified rather than relaxed under the first working of emancipation. Considering the relative positions and resources of the two sections at that crisis, it is hard to see, even now, how matters could have gone differently at that juncture. We on our part could have done no less, in decency, than we have done for the Negro. If our brethren of the South—who have now a better understanding of the spirit of our work—might later have done more, it is to be also said that they are in reality just now first coming to their opportunity for effective cooperation. Very slowly have the conditions which indicate such opportunity emerged from the clashing of past and present racial relations in the South.

Inbred convictions and life-long mental habits cannot be reversed in a decade or two. Angle, focus, and light, all suddenly changed, left vision blurred. Body, mind, and soul had to readjust themselves. The Negro rushed to the first light held before him. It was illusive. It has taken him many years to learn how the kindliness of feeling which is deeply rooted in long association is more trustworthy, *as far as it goes*, and may in the outcome be *much more serviceable* to him than the fervid sentimentalities of speech or election-time promises that when uttered seem to go a great deal farther, but somehow fail to take him along.

It has become perfectly clear that the masses of the colored race must and can make headway where they were born and still are, and under constantly improving environment. They cannot be moved elsewhere. A great boon to both races, after fifty years of turmoil, is the growing conviction that since four fifths of the Negro people must continue to live in the South, and their interests, material and moral, remain intimately iden-

tified with the welfare of the South, therefore, their training should be toward, and not away from, sympathetic relations and harmonious cooperation with the white people who—after all that may be said—are to be for many years their nearest neighbors as well as their advisers and employers. The destinies of the two races are so indissolubly joined, particularly in that section, that neither can wrong the other without injuring itself; and, really, this patent fact is the best possible continuous guarantee of the welfare of the millions of blacks in the old South. No church or political party operating apart from their Southern friends, and certainly no man or men, can by any device or propaganda create for them a stronger guarantee than is assured by an intelligent self-interest when supported by a sense of religious duty. A sympathetic attitude in line with the providential status and with the efforts of those nearest to the task, will help far more than will distrustful agitation.

These words are dated the year of our Lord 1915, in January of which year the

leading editorial of the official organ of the Church South contained these unequivocal words: "Yesterday millions of men, many of them good men, believed in slavery. To-day no man can understand how such a belief could have been held." A remarkable change in fifty years? Yes, but hardly more startling than the change of sentiment in our own church since the day when one abolition prayer would have spoiled a prayer meeting, or set the preacher adrift had he uttered it. Our people of to-day do not often, if ever, recall the record of the mobings in Northern towns and cities, of editors and orators who dared to denounce slavery. Our fathers fought a glorious fight against the *extension of slave territory*, but prior to the Civil War the out-and-out abolitionist was under boycott in both church and state. In this new crisis of Methodism let us clear up our facts and dump our surplus of complacency. God expects absolute honesty now. The truth is that the nation, the North included, gave protection to slavery and had not decided to put it away up to

the day when God made it plain to Abraham Lincoln that he could not save the Union with slavery—as, true to his declaration, he had tried to do. Even then, "military necessity," not Congress nor conscience, became its recognized executioner. So acute was the political crisis due to emancipation that the great party which had heretofore opposed only the *extension* of slave territory, and had elected Mr. Lincoln on that main issue, required the divine sanction of great victories in the field before openly claiming as a party achievement what Mr. Lincoln had pledged himself to do when one day far beyond party call holding an interview with God. Those of us who lived through that eventful period know the history. The war was waged for "the Union." That was the conquering slogan, not freedom for the slave. These things are here written in the interest of truth and progress. No church was responsible for the existence of slavery any more than any church now is responsible for the tariff issue.

And at this point let us be just to the

fathers, both South and North. Our last General Conference approved the following statement agreed upon between the commissioners of the two churches in 1910. "We are mutually agreed that our fathers settled the issues of the past conscientiously for themselves, respectively, and separated regretfully, believing that only such action could insure their continued access to the people they were called to serve." That statement is honorable to both churches. To the men of 1844 the conditions were inexorable. Who can censure those shepherds of souls in either section who, seeing the storm at hand, tried to save their sheep from scattering? Up to that crucial day they had been first of all *evangelists*, and as such one in heart and purpose, comrades in a holy crusade. It cost them many a pang of spirit to become two camps. All incidental contentions aside, *they separated to save what they had builded at so great a cost.* They knew that the preacher must be sympathetically related to the people he seeks to lead, and they could not change the indus-

trial, political, educational, and social antagonisms of the two sections. Nor, indeed, could the people on either side change the conditions into which they had been born. The North could not receive slavery, the South could not put it away. So completely had it imbedded itself, as an industrial system, in the laws and constitutional guarantees of the nation as well as the slave States, that the master could no more escape from his slave than the slave from his master. We can now see what we could not see prior to the war—the how and why of a "solid South." There was no alternative left to the people. They were isolated by their inherited environment and at bay in its defense. The common weal became their politics, inspired their faith, entered into their religious convictions and crystallized into unity of thought and action, just as any formidable peril which might threaten the overturning of our own domestic life, the destruction of property values, the very means of livelihood and the right of self-government would instantly create a solid

North and hold it solid until the danger had passed.

But such values are not all. We shall not have fully accounted for the persistent cohesiveness of the "solid South" until we include another factor which operates with tremendous effect upon the hearts of a civilized people. Wherever the campaign against slavery was waged on moral and religious grounds there was an open or implied impeachment of the moral and religious character of every slave-owner. This was inevitable in such a battle, yet this was the arrow that went deepest and that rankles longest. Children taught to reverence God, to read his Word, to confess their sins in prayer, to keep the Sabbath, and trained to be keenly sensitive to family as well as individual honor, could not brook such an indictment of their fathers and mothers. Who can wonder that in two generations the memory has not quite faded away? Yet it would verily take another war to put slavery back upon the South. As an issue between the sections it is so dead that even

the politicians have turned away from it, and the republic, leaping free from its handicap, long since bounded forward in its race with kingdoms and empires to find its place at the front. Why have the churches so long faced backward? At last, at last, at last, even the two greatest religious factors of the war are looking into each other's eyes and hearts and asking, "What would God have *us* to do?" Do they mean it? If they do, that takes us back to their first common duty named at the opening of this chapter, and for the practicability of which we now have a workable, because correct, background of history, and of the motives that made the history. No perspective of historical church divisions can be correct which shows all actors on one side good and all on the other side wicked; and it is astonishing how far a little love goes in healing the hurts of old misunderstandings when good men are working toward each other in God's presence, instead of distrustfully edging away from each other in forgetfulness of God. A spiritual glow attends every exor-

cism of partisan suspicion, and moving forward with increasing confidence to the severer tests of their inspired purpose, they soon forget trenches, guns, and uniforms, and listen only for the Voice that spoke to their own hearts the first real peace they ever knew—the peace that still passeth all understanding. Only in God is peace for Methodism.

What will the Voice now say? Do we hear aright? What! Fill up the old trenches? Dismantle the forts? Silence the guns of battle? Wipe out the frontier, stop the waste of men and money, and throw your united armies against the common foe? Well, what less could we expect God to say? Does a shadow suddenly cross the vision?—was it the shadow of the ugly past or was it cast by the wing of Apollyon in flight? Surely, it is not the shadow of the Negro, for he is not the enemy of either party to the conference, but the ally of both. But recently an influential Southern voice proposed a monument to forever commemorate the Negro's fidelity to his master's home and family

during the Civil War when temptation beset his path every day. Faithful as a servant in the fields and home, loyal as a soldier in every war in which he has borne the denominational flag, and only waiting drill and equipment to do his part in whatever battles Methodism has yet ahead, the only query is, not whether he shall be a soldier of our King, but Where shall he fight? Shall there be a Negro corps in the united armies of Methodism or shall the Negro divisions constitute an allied army under perpetual treaty, offensive and defensive? Not one voice would suggest that the negro be excluded from the fighting line. Not one would deny him the name of Methodist, or refuse to trust him with the Methodist banner. So much is already assured. Manhood, fidelity, and courage are accorded to him. Thus uniformed as man, Christian, and Methodist, he is to be trained and fitted for better service. There is nothing else to do. Then, whether he wins honor or goes down in shame, his own conduct must determine—just as is the case with his white comrades in the same

war. No trouble thus far. *Both churches have ordained a Negro ministry and declared for Christian education and industrial training for the Negro.*

So the shadow has passed, and the spot where the Father still waits is gloriously illumined as he gently suggests that the *main points being agreed upon, the practical details be left to be adjusted by experience in working the new program.* All are satisfied except possibly a few confirmed theorists on both sides, and these are surprised at their own silence. But what more would they have, or could they demand, either in reason or conscience? Is it asked if the Southern brethren would agree to such a program? In practice they have already sanctioned it. A single utterance from the lips of one of their strongly representative bishops may serve as additional answer: "The relation of the Negro to our problems is absolutely pathetic. He did not bring himself into them, he cannot extricate himself from them. His claim on us cannot be set aside." This bishop is not an exceptional

exponent. Negro-burning mobs have disgraced both North and South, but for kindliness toward the Negro as expressed in charity for his everyday racial delinquencies the people who have known him always are the more considerate. Their counsel would be of immense value in shaping any comprehensive program for his continued development.

We may be pardoned for a special word just here to our Southern brethren who so strongly insist that slavery was not in itself the issue that divided the church, but the occasion only of the constitutional issue on which the result turned. After what has been here written it must be plain that we would not provoke discussion on that point by affirming the contrary. But, surely, we are not bound to agree in terms as to all past issues before we can set about the constructive task before us, which suggests a line of study and of reorganization with special reference to present conditions and outlook, without embarrassment entailed by conditions of long ago.

We come now to what is regarded by many as the crucial question in the problem of unification. It has already been touched upon by intimation, but its importance demands that it shall be squarely met. Will the Church South agree to any plan that includes Negro membership and Negro representation in the General Conference? For the moment deferring direct answer, we suggest that the question could be appropriately amended by adding the words, "provided the Negro desires such a relation to the proposed reorganization." Both the negotiating bodies, having long ago recognized the Negro as a redeemed man, therefore eligible to full citizenship in the kingdom of Christ, and to all the benefits of saving grace on the same conditions as other men, have thereby jointly invested him with *manhood-consciousness*, and *freedom* of *choice* in matters affecting his own destiny Nothing has happened to him in our church to take away this liberty. He is not bound to us except by continuous inclination, nor can he be so bound without harm to himself

and to us. To be sure, we have befriended him, but to befriend a man in need does not give the benefactor the right to dictate his career. The very assumption of such a right would rob benevolence of its fine essential quality. We have in our church many sincere friends of the colored people, but no one would think of thwarting their preference for pastors of their own race, or for separate congregations. It is recognized by all that their separate Conferences and congregations have developed a leadership as well as a spirit of self-reliance in church affairs that would have been impossible in continued association with white congregations. It is due to the *consciousness of* manhood responsibility that the Negro has made such wonderful progress. He has bought land, built houses, managed contract work, made headway in the professions, organized great churches and creditably conducted their affairs. It is not without the warrant of achievement that he asks insistently to be recognized, not as what he was, but as what he is and promises to become.

He is aspiring, even ambitious. He is *not* looking to the social patronage or consideration of his white brother to hold him up, but is earnestly asking for a fair chance for his race *in its own name* to enter manhood's full estate. Our own colored membership is of the best of its race. We cannot arbitrarily thrust our Negro people from us, nor put them away for any lapse in loyalty or failure to learn and to grow as we have given them opportunity. On the other hand, we may not fairly interpose any theory of ours as a barrier to their natural ambition for racial initiative and achievement. It is this ambition that has led them to ask us again and again for bishops of their own color. If there is a well-informed leader in the Methodist Episcopal Church who believes that the church will yet elect a colored general superintendent, it would still devolve upon that exceptional believer to show how that would help the Negro race—which, like every other race, *must grow from within*, if at all.

As to the question, then, "What of our

Negro membership in the event of Methodist unification?"—it is plainly a question on which they should be consulted before their racial interests are dragged into an untimely and perhaps needless discussion. This suggestion is only the more opportune in view of the renewed agitation among our colored Conferences of the once rejected constitutional amendment providing for the election of "bishops for races and languages." The indications now point strongly to their approval of this amendment—a fact which could only be taken as a new and significant expression of the racial consciousness and its natural aspirations. In the election of the bishops chosen in 1912, four of whom, all white men, now administer the colored Conferences in the South, the Negro delegates cast about *one vote in ten.* Should the amendment now on its rounds among the Annual Conferences prevail, the Negro bishops thus provided would be elected by a vote of about *nine white delegates to every Negro delegate.* It must be admitted that such a test of loyalty to church order would

be too severe for our white membership were the numerical disproportion reversed. If the Negro is really what we declare him—*a man*—and if the help we have given him *in Christ's name* does not entitle us to exercise his manhood prerogatives for him, on what principle, impartially applicable also to ourselves, may we first assume to say whether or not our Negro members shall have bishops of their own color, and, if so, that we shall then vote nine times to their once in electing *their* bishops?

This putting of the case, so far from being intended to influence the action of our colored brethren, is believed to be in line with their up-to-date thinking, the expression of which they find embarrassing; first, lest it seem to indicate a lack of gratitude for benefits received; secondly, lest some accuse them of disloyalty and personal ambitions; and, finally, because of the partisan protests of some of their white brethren, who have thought of but one aspect of the subject, and that the least important.

In concluding this chapter the author ven-

tures, for what it is worth, his individual judgment that our Negro membership will not be a barrier to further negotiations between the two churches. He believes that both churches are sincerely desirous for the highest welfare of the Negro people whom God has left to their care.

CHAPTER IX

THE BOGEY OF SECTIONALISM

To the stranger visiting our country to-day, or to the younger men and women of our States, North or South, it must seem incredible that only fifty years ago we were just at the end of the great Civil War. To any student of history it must appear no less amazing that within two decades of the termination of that awful struggle some of the men who sought to slay each other in battle were amicably legislating on equal footing in the national capitol and vying with each other in devotion to the reunited republic; and that before one generation had passed surviving leaders of the Southern armies were leading the sons of Confederate soldiers to victory over an alien foe under the old flag which their fathers had sought to displace.

More than that, many of the soldiers who

faced each other in that struggle have lived to see a Republican President appoint, and a Republican Senate confirm, staunch Southern Democrats as judges of the Supreme Court of the nation; and—what is more divinely thrilling—have lived to hear from that Supreme Court its unanimous verdict, delivered by its Chief Justice, a former Confederate soldier, declaring unconstitutional certain State legislation in conflict with the fifteenth amendment, which was at the time of its adoption obnoxious to the entire South. And this happens while all the machinery of the national government is in complete control of Southern men with a native Virginian at their head. Yet in the face of this miracle of political reconciliation between the States and the masses of the people, a miracle wrought in spite of the selfish sectional outcries from the lips of partisan leaders, we are still hearing doleful portents of what will happen to Methodism should the millions of Americans who bear the same apostolic banner begin to trust each other. Verily, the keen-visioned publicans

and political marplots have entered the kingdom of peace and hope before us.

Yet to some of us who have the uncanny habit of "seein' things at night" the tallest ghost that stalks over the battlefield of Methodism is the spirit of sectionalism. It is a specter as mighty as it is "flighty." Full well we know that "East is East and West is West"—and that one is as provincial as the other in its commercial individuality and social vision, yet nobody is trembling for the nation on that account. But that the South is South—as if it could be the North if it would—that seems a more serious matter. Well, once it was, but, thank God, that day has passed. We of the North are a more heterogeneous people, and, therefore, it may be, have a less provincial consciousness than the South. Indeed, it has been intimated abroad that we Yankees have a cosmic consciousness, in our acquisitive faculty at least.

However that may be, it is quite possible that to critical onlookers we may appear somewhat provincial in our high valuation of our own missionary propaganda when

we pass by great multitudes of unevangelized foreign-born people in the North, whose thoughts and ways are a menace to our cities and to our most cherished institutions, and when we skimp our own clamoring Western frontiers, that we may specialize among our countrymen in the South, where, by our own clear admission, there is already a Methodism "equally legitimate and apostolic" with our own, and a population distinctively American by birth. We may well press the question upon ourselves whether we are thus proving that we are *not* provincial and sectional in our ideas, or that we are.

It is not a welcome suspicion that there may be a taint in our own brand of Methodist legitimacy, but are we taking the better way to prove the contrary? Anyway, before we vaunt too much the *Methodistic utility* of what we call *non*-sectionalism, ought we not to inquire whether our type produces a better quality of Methodist products than that which we call sectional; whether family religion and parental example

among us are more spiritual, and filial regard more tender; whether our family ties are more affectionate and enduring, the marriage bond more sacred, the Sabbath better observed, the Word of God more revered, the aged more respected for their years; whether fundamental doctrines are more clearly preached, and last, but by no means least, whether our denominational loyalty to our own educational foundations is more steadfast and self-sacrificing,—whether in all these marks of spiritual development and Methodistic aims we have attained better results than have been realized under the "sectional" sky—however cosmopolitan the spirit of our work may be? But, really, *unless we propose to load our simple gospel message with some added political or ethical demands that could not be classed under the head of "apostolic Methodism,"* both churches, remember, being *now and since 1844 "equally apostolic,"* it is hard to see what place this fear of a sectional South in Methodism can have in the project of a Methodist union. History has killed the once pertinent empha-

sis on sectionalism. A church that can adapt its message and its polity to India, China, Japan, Korea, to the polyglot peoples of Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America, surely ought to be able to accommodate in one fold all the people of the United States where it was born.

The Roman Catholic Church, which is autocratic or nothing, is yet wise enough in administration to conform its ministries to the land and people it is seeking to win. It is the business of Methodism, North or South, to win, not to repel the souls of men. There is no compromise of principle or conscience, but there is sound sense in the sympathetic adjustment of preachers to their respective fields, so that every man may have the largest possible promise of success, through an unhindered access to his hearers. Where is the peril in following the plain, simple law of homogeneity in church organization and in conforming methods to the people served?

How long, O Lord, how long are thy people in this land which they all love, to feed on

old animosities and suffer from the nightmare of sectionalism? Together we have paid the blood penalty for our national sin for which we were jointly responsible, and now that the nation is retrieving its losses and rapidly increasing in its resources, why should Methodism go on paying soul-penalty forever? God has given us as Americans a continental habitation. The North does not belong to the North—nor the South to the South. In climate, soils, products, opportunities, types of people, and community of interests God has wonderfully coordinated the North, South, East and West for the common welfare and the highest destiny. Offensively and defensively, along our every coast and border, we are one people. And yet some of God's own children are so obsessed with dread of each other that they think and feel and talk in terms of fifty years ago. The Negro is free, but millions of white people are still in bondage to the spectral past. Long ago God crowned the dead heroes of both armies and covered their graves with verdure and flowers that

we might forget the days of bitterness. But Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists—"Northern" and "Southern," whether they so call themselves or not—are still camping on their old battlefields, exchanging fraternal words, but afraid to trust each other with any of their accumulated spoils. What a spectacle for saints in heaven and sinners on earth!

What does it matter to Episcopal Methodism as God's evangel whether corn is king, or cotton is king, or in which section any great soul fitted to rule became incarnate? As between corn and cotton we may consistently reflect that whisky is not made from cotton—nor war explosives from corn. But it is our business to see that both are made to *serve* humanity—the one to feed the hungry, the other to clothe the naked.

If contentious saints must have some excuse for their separate organizations it were better to seek a reason that does not impeach their sanity as well as their spirit. Geographically there must be "sections." But the sole peril of sectionalism, either

political or ecclesiastical, lies in antagonistic *fundamental interests.* Fundamental interests are those which involve life, opportunity, freedom, civil rights, and equality before the law. What we are trying to think about and plan for now is METHODISM—Methodism as God gave it birth and being in the heart and thought of John Wesley; Methodism as Asbury conceived it and transmitted it to our pioneer fathers; Methodism as a great evangelistic and constructive religious agency for bringing people to Christ and building them into the temple of God; Methodism one in doctrine and experience the world over to-day. That is the heart of our trust—the faith that holds the hopes of more than six millions of adherents. And who can point to one single feature or factor of this *real and essential Methodism* as to which there is fundamental antagonism of interests, or even conflict of opinion between these two Episcopal Methodist bodies? *In all that constitutes Methodism they are of one mind and heart.* They did not differ on essential Methodism. They were separated by a

national cleavage, political, commercial, social, that swept them apart. The fundamental antagonisms back of that sectional cleavage of the nation have been settled forever. The sections are merged in the nation. Yet Methodism is still preaching "free grace" in hysterical dread of a ghost that has been repudiated by the government, denounced by the people, protested by commerce, and no longer has a haunt except in the churches! Corner this ghost, and it materializes, not as the guardian of Methodism in its essential character and mission, but as a specialist in the religious value of bitter memories, or as an ecclesiastical corporation lawyer ready to prove that Methodism consists chiefly in its title deeds, endowments, charters, etc., which would all be jeoparded if God should break down the wall that sectionalism built—as if God could not take charge of his own property long enough for his trustees to put it in more productive shape. It may be, as the sheikh remarked, that when a man does not want to do a thing, one reason is as good as another; but this long-since exorcised

ghost of a dead reason will not frighten Methodists of this day from a holy task.

The psychological cure for sectional consciousness, where it is still sporadically present, is to quit talking about it.

CHAPTER X

CEASE TO DO EVIL

SPEAKING to a body of students, Bishop McDowell recently said: "Every form of evil and every appearance of it must be avoided and excluded. The apartments of life are not water tight. Evil anywhere spoils it all. Do not say one good word for evil. It is the ruin of spirituality, the foe of the Spirit; it vitiates and perverts teachings and prophesyings; it destroys the tests and weakens the hold on goodness. Have nothing to do with it. Cut it all off and all out. Probably no one is as bad as he can be, as full of evil as he might be, but the evil that is in a man, the impurity, the untruthfulness, the malice, spoils the man. It runs clear through him."

Now let one read this strong passage, substituting the church for the individual, as he reads, and note how marvelously

the words apply to evil done by the church in its own name. Is any department of the church so evil-tight that evil in its corporate policy or conduct cannot reach it? Is not a word in defense of un-Christian behavior by the church "a good word for evil"? When a church offends habitually and for a long time against the law of Christ does not its offense "vitiate and pervert its teachings and prophesyings, and destroy the tests and weaken the hold on goodness" throughout its membership? Probably no church is as bad as it can be, but whatever of evil it practices or condones "spoils it" as a church, and the evil "runs clear through" it. Thus has the evil of denominational selfishness poisoned and sickened and weakened the churches, and impaired their spirituality, and curtailed their influence for good by vitiating their teachings and perverting their prophesyings; and yet the church is the best institution on earth, and God's best teacher of morals and religion. Surely, God's people "doth not consider," else would they heed when he says,

"Wash you; make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil; learn to do well."

O that our Methodist Israel might "know" how deep in millions of souls is the hurt of their strife! And it is so needless, and so unprofitable, and so unchurch-like, as well as irreverent, if not almost defiant, toward their patient, long-waiting Lord and Saviour.

How we thank God every time one of our real statesmen overrides a hedge of prejudice and reveals a vision coextensive with his trust. We may learn from such leaders wisdom as well as charity.

The ruts of past contentions cannot hold such men. It is out of the resources, opportunities, and inspirations of to-day that they are shaping the future of the country. To quote from another print words which this writer may honestly use without quotation marks: They refuse the counsels of implacables on both sides of defunct questions. Facing the front and the demand of tomorrow, they take no note of scrimmages

by the wayside in the rear of the procession. Onward! The best days and the greatest achievements are ahead. No time to umpire old controversies. Crown the dead for doing the duty that was theirs, as they saw it when they lived, and *move on*, emulating their fidelity to their day. The times demand action, not recrimination. We are one people—let us be a great and magnanimous people. Let us make new history rather than waste time marching around moss-covered forts. Plow them under and sow the seeds of peace and prosperity. So patriotism speaks. So the men we applaud as statesmen interpret duty. Why not we, also, for the churches proclaim that the day of the obstructionist is past?

There are considerations, larger than denominational interests, to which Christian people cannot afford to be indifferent. *The churches cannot innocently retard the manifest growth of confidence and good will among the people of the country at large.* With ever-increasing benignity the soul of Abraham Lincoln has from the day of his tragic death

been brooding over the land. Born in the old South, grown in the spacious West, called to sacrificial service and martyrdom in the Jerusalem of his country, that seer of seers, the mystic of deep spiritual insight, spoke in his second inaugural address like a prophet of farseeing vision. Penetrating beyond the faces of the living multitude, peering through many bleeding hearts and ghastly graves into the mind of God—for he stood almost in sight of bloody battlefields where brave Americans had died by thousands for the right as they understood it, whether from North or South—he caught the Christ-note that rang so clear and vibrant above the frenzies of fratricidal carnage: "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive to finish the work we are in, to *bind up the nation's wounds*, . . . to do all which may achieve a just and lasting peace *among ourselves* and with all nations." Ah! had he lived malice would have sooner died, and charity had her way. Fifty eventful years have come and gone since that day of his

communing with his dead and living countrymen. The "peace among ourselves" has come. For many of these years all the States have shared the honors and responsibilities of the government. The surviving heroes of our fratricidal struggle meet without restraint in social, political, and commercial fellowship. The dead are with God and cannot suffer from malice, nor do they need charity. It is to the living that the voice of the seer is addressed. He, this modern Abraham, saw Christ's coming day and was glad as he sounded the note of vindication for the dead and of reconciliation for the survivors of the awful conflict. How his sad face must have lighted as he beheld the future of his country through the dissolving clouds of war!

But now as we look for the culmination of his dream of peace, we see great Christian churches still divided on sectional lines, still distrustful, still contending—God forgive them! No one of them can claim that God is glorified or saints edified, the gospel magnified, or the nation unified by per-

petuating these needless divisions in the leading denominations. They are signs, not of grace but of human weaknesses.

Who is to blame? Not the busy, burdened masses, whose supreme heart yearning is for God and salvation, for solace and help in their toils and sorrows. Looking to their churches for inspiration and instruction in righteous living, they hear and follow. But their leaders must accept a grave responsibility for the continuance of these divisions. Leadership is not in itself sanctifying. Denominational separateness is deeply grooved in the education, the church affiliations, the personal associations and the personal interests and outlook of men trained for the ministry. It could hardly be otherwise. Most of us have breathed denominational air until it seems necessary to spiritual health. From childhood "our church" has been identified with our conception of truth and duty. It is no wonder that any ism, however narrow its footing, comes at last to command in the name of God and conscience.

Then, what is a leader without a slogan? How many fine souls there are who are too big for manuals of arms and bugle calls, but seem destined to live in barracks; for men do not become leaders by putting off the denominational colors. Thus it turns out that these "nonessentials" we talk about as innocent differences become the essentials to the denomination that goes apart to build upon them, and in the outcome it is the "nonessential" that holds both the peace of congregations and the parsonage supplies—as many a poor pastor has found when he has bungled the shibboleth of his specialized gospel.

These intimations go far toward accounting for the cohesiveness of denominations, and the hesitancy of leaders to enter into even the most natural coalitions. And there still remain the leaders' natural ambition "to make good," and, on the other hand, the ever-dreaded charge that he flunked or betrayed his cause.

But until leaders lead, people will not follow. Breaking down the walls between

Jew and Gentile was a daring venture with Jesus and Paul. They paid the penalty of Jewish wrath, but Jesus led the way, Paul followed his Lord, and their maligners are forgotten except as partisan zealots.

As for these Methodist churches, however, their leaders have nothing to fear except the divine displeasure if they continue to foster strife. Methodism gives large hospitality to opinions conscientiously avowed unless they controvert the fundamentals of the Christian faith and tend to corrupt conduct. "We think and let think."

But here is a great evil that ought to be put away. Everybody who knows anything about Christian consistency, or about the responsibility of an honorable stewardship of funds and opportunities, or who holds a conscientious regard for the decencies of religion, knows that it is an evil, a calamitous evil. Every pastor knows by his own experience that a contentious spirit in his church household is destructive. Contention defies church order, banishes reverence, and overrides the very altars of God in its passion for

supremacy. It paralyzes the judgment even of good men, until they turn from both reproof and reason. How can we expect any better fruit from the same spirit in the larger field of denominational activity? Have we not witnessed the dire results already in lamentable repetition?

Again let it be repeated that in the present condition of Methodism Christ is the only way of escape from our entanglements. He alone can break down the middle wall of partition. For his sake let us heed the pleading of the Spirit—and of the world's crisis-prayer.

We all believe that some day there will be a nation too great to go to war. It will be a nation so strong that it need not prove its strength in arms; a nation so just that it need not fight to secure justice from other nations; a nation so brave in its open reverence for God and for Jesus Christ that no monarch will sneer when its diplomats quote the decalogue or the higher law; a nation so gentle toward child nations and decrepit nations that they will neither fear

it nor turn from its counsel; a nation so honorable in its making and keeping of treaties that they will never need to be either ordained in blood or rewritten by the sword; a nation so honest in commercial intercourse that its products will need no convoy of battleships to force them into any port of the world. Having risen above the plane of war, that nation will not make or sell munitions of war. Armored in righteousness, it will require no fortresses. Like an omnipotent magnet that nation will draw to its shores the warworn, overtaxed, home-wrecked millions of the world. Its name will shine like the sun, and its bounty to the betrayed, the despoiled, the famine-stricken, the fever-ravaged peoples beyond its borders, will carry new life and hope, even as the rays of the sun.

That nation is already seen above the horizon that marks the level of national character and achievement.

MILLENNIAL AMERICA is nearer than before Europe took its plunge backward to barbarism.

God needs it sooner than even the dreamers have dreamed. Happy the American who shall come to the dignity of citizenship in that day. But the ideal nation—the peace-loving, peace-keeping nation—CANNOT BE BORN OUT OF WARRING CHURCHES.

Men do not "gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles." Creeds that divide, politics that clash, propagandas that irritate can never, never lead to the ideal church which is to be the builder of the Christian State. THE IDEAL REPUBLIC AND THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST ARE ONE.

Ministers of God—can we rise to the ideal? May *God* make the vision so enthralling that our people shall not wait in vain for the apostolic leadership of these apostolic churches to bring forward the day of peace to our Zion as the herald of peace to all the borders of Israel. Amen!

APPENDIX

MANUAL OF PROCEDURE ADOPTED BY THE FEDERAL COUNCIL OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH

[By direction of the Federal Council, composed of the Commissioners on Federation, representing the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (See Discipline, 1912, paragraph 563), the following action of the Council—unanimously taken at Nashville, Tennessee, January 22, 1914—is published for the information and guidance of all adminstrative officers and of all our people, with the earnest hope that the tribunal thus organized may effectively serve the ends of peace, for which it was constituted.—*Commissioners for the Methodist Episcopal Church.*]

Preamble and Principles

Preamble: The Federal Council of Methodism is constituted of six bishops, six traveling preachers, and six laymen, equally divided between the two Churches, and is the outgrowth of an increasing fraternal affection between the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Its functions and powers are thus defined by the action of the General Conferences of these Churches: "Said Federal Council shall be entrusted with advisory powers in regard to world-wide missions, Christian education, and the evangelization of the unchurched masses; and shall have power to hear and finally determine, without appeal from its decision,

all cases of conflict or misunderstanding between the two branches of Methodism."

The calls for men and money from the foreign fields and from pressing situations in our own country make it imperative that we shall seek to remove causes which dissipate our energies and encourage hurtful competition in the Home field. In not a few instances struggling congregations of the one Church are situated in communities where the other Church is sufficiently strong to command the situation.

The General Conferences of both Churches through repeated declarations have approved the principle that when either Church is doing the work expected of Methodism in any community the other Church should not organize a society or erect a church building in that community.

The General Conferences have also directed the administrative officers of Annual Conferences and of the various Church boards, organizations, and societies interested, to regard carefully the decisions and recommendations of the Federal Council.

In its consideration and decision of cases the Federal Council will always follow the spirit of the various existing joint agreements in the effort to relieve misunderstandings and conflicts and to prevent the waste of means and forces in unseemly rivalry, and as far as practicable the very letter of the agreements will be carried out.

It is apparent that the agreements entered upon by the General Conferences make it inconsistent for the Federal Council to approve the use of Missionary, Church Extension, or other connectional or Conference funds to enter communities where the other Church is doing the work expected of Methodism. It is equally apparent that the

spirit of the existing agreements demands that when in communities where both Churches are represented, questions are raised regarding the expansion or strengthening of existing work dependent upon the use of connectional or Conference funds, they shall also be adjusted by their reference to the Federal Council. And in disposing of same the Council will be guided by the spirit of the foregoing declaration.

Initial Procedure

Relative to the formal presentation and hearing of cases of conflict coming under the provisions of our General Conferences, the Federal Council publishes the following Rules of Procedure for the information of all concerned:

1. That all Annual Conferences in territory occupied by both Churches be requested and urged to appoint Conference Commissions of Federation, consisting of not less than three members nor more than five each, some of whom may be laymen, for the settlement of all cases of local irritation and complaint arising between the two Churches. That during the application or hearing of a case, either by the Annual Conference Commission or on appeal, the *status quo* shall be preserved until the case is heard and finally determined; but when a complaint duly filed is not presented for a first hearing within ninety days, where Conference Commissions exist, the complainant forfeits its rights to a hearing.

2. All complaints shall be submitted in writing by the Quarterly Conference to the Presiding Elder and District Superintendent officially concerned, who shall investigate, and if possible adjust the matter amicably.

In the event they fail to reach an agreement on the case, then the same shall be submitted to a joint meeting of the Conference Federation Commissions of the Annual Conferences concerned, who shall hear and determine the same, and their records with the conclusion reached shall be spread on the records of the respective Annual Conferences involved. If, however, either party feels itself aggrieved by the decision, it shall have the right of appeal to the Federal Council, provided notice of appeal is given within thirty days after the said decision, and all the papers and records of the case as heard before the joint Conference Commissions shall thereupon be sent to the secretary of the Federal Council, and a duplicate copy of the same furnished at the same time to the party or parties against whom the appeal is taken. Where from any cause Conference Federation Commissions may not have been appointed, the Presiding Elder and District Superintendent having been unable to adjust the trouble, then the complaint, if endorsed by either of them as worthy of a hearing, shall be forwarded to the secretary of the Federal Council for the complainants' Church.

3. All sessions of the Conference Federation Commissions, as well as those of the Federal Council, shall be private and held with closed doors, unless otherwise determined unanimously by said Commission or Federal Council.

4. No statement, brief, or proceeding shall be of a personally offensive character, or in unbrotherly language, nor oral evidence, statements, or pleadings be allowed in hearings by the Federal Council, unless ordered by the Council.

5. All decisions as made by the Federal Council shall

be recorded with the proceedings in permanent form, and preserved by the secretaries for the use of future Federal Councils.

6. The expense of the Conference hearings and preparing appeals shall be provided for by the Conferences concerned. The expense of the Federal Council will be paid by the General Conferences.

SPECIAL RULES AND REGULATIONS ADOPTED FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL IN HEARING, TRYING, AND DECIDING ALL CASES PRESENTED TO IT:

1. Six members from each Commission shall constitute a quorum for the hearing of any case.

2. The presiding officer at the trial shall be of the Church not instituting the complaint.

3. A deciding vote of the Federal Council shall require a majority of the members present, and such majority vote must include at least three members of the Commission of each Church.

4. The trial shall be *de novo*. The appellant or complainant shall file a formal complaint, which shall be addressed to the Federal Council of the two Methodist Churches, and shall contain by way of allegation all of the matters of which the party complains fully and with particularity, and shall make the proper parties who are directly involved defendants to the petition, and the same shall be signed by the said appellant or complainant.

5. To which complaint the appellee or defendant shall file an answer or reply with the secretary of said Council within forty-five days, which answer shall contain the

necessary relevant averments in reply to the petition, with such facts and matters as the defendant or appellee relies upon to sustain the merits of his case, which answer or reply shall be addressed to the Council and be signed by the appellee or defendant.

6. Accompanying the petition as well as the answer shall be submitted the evidence, in writing, upon which both sides depend. The complainant may file evidence in rebuttal within forty days after the filing of the answer.

7. The petitioner or appellant may rely upon the petition without brief, or may file a brief within thirty days after the expiration of the time for filing rebuttal evidence. Within thirty days after the same is filed appellee may file his brief, and appellant may within ten days thereafter file a reply thereto.

8. All papers presented to the Council shall be typewritten, and four copies thereof furnished the Council. At the same time one copy shall be furnished the opposite party. The Council may call for oral argument, of which call ten days' notice shall be given each party.

9. After the complete record is before the Council the case shall be heard and determined upon its merits, and such decision shall become the judgment of the Council, be spread upon its records, and a copy be certificd and furnished to each party, and otherwise be officially published in such form as may be determined hereafter.

10. The principles and method of procedure herein set forth shall apply to all existing cases of conflict, as well as to cases that shall arise hereafter.

11. Thc Council may, on good cause shown, modify these rules.

[Agreed to by all the commissioners of both Churches.]

THE REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMISSIONS AND OF THE ACTION THEREON OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH:

In December, 1910, negotiations concerning unification by reorganization were entered upon by the Joint Commission, the Commissioners of the Methodist Protestant Church participating, when the Commissions of the Methodist Episcopal Church presented a communication in which they gave reasons by which they were moved, and said: "We hereby tender a brotherly invitation to the Commissions of the respective Churches to consider with us at this time the desirability and practicability of organic union." After declaring, "We are mutually agreed that the Churches represented by us are equally apostolic in faith and purpose and have a common origin, the Methodist Episcopal Church, organized in 1784; that they are joint heirs of the traditions and doctrinal standards of the fathers," and "that our fathers settled the issues of the past conscientiously for themselves, respectively, and separated regretfully," the Joint Commission representing the three Churches appointed a Joint Committee of Nine, three from each Commission, to bring to the Joint Commission, if found practicable, a plan for submission to the General Conferences and people of the respective Churches, which provides "for such unification, through reorganization of the Methodist Churches concerned, as shall insure unity of purpose, administration, evangelistic effort, and all other functions for which our Methodism has stood from the beginning." This special Committee

of Nine met in Cincinnati, January 18, 1911. The Joint Commission met May 10, 1911, in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and after giving three days to the consideration of the report of the Committee of Nine, adopted the following:

1. "We suggest, as a plan of reorganization, the merging of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, into one Church, to be known as the Methodist Episcopal Church in America or the Methodist Church in America.

2. "We suggest that this Church shall have throughout common Articles of Faith, common conditions of membership, a common hymnal, a common catechism, and a common ritual.

3. "We suggest that the governing power of the reorganized Church shall be vested in one General Conference and three or four Quadrennial Conferences, both General and Quadrennial Conferences to exercise their powers under constitutional provisions and restrictions, the General Conference to have full legislative power over all matters distinctively connectional, and the Quadrennial Conferences to have full legislative power over distinctively local affairs. We suggest that the colored membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, and such organizations of colored Methodists as may enter into agreement with them may be constituted and recognized as one of the Quadrennial or Jurisdictional Conferences of the proposed reorganization.

4. "We suggest that the General Conference shall consist of two houses, each house to be composed of equal

numbers of ministerial and lay delegates. The delegates in the first house shall be apportioned equally among the Quadrennial Conferences and elected under equitable rules to be provided therefor. The ministerial delegates in the second house shall be elected by the ministerial members in the Annual Conferences, and the lay delegates by the laity within the Annual Conferences, under equitable rules to be provided therefor. Each Annual Conference shall have at least one ministerial and one lay delegate. The larger Conferences shall have one additional ministerial and one additional lay delegate for every —— ministerial members of the Conference, also an additional ministerial and lay delegate where there is an excess of two thirds of the fixed rate of representation. All legislation of the General Conference shall require the concurrent action of the two houses.

5. "We suggest that the Quadrennial Conferences shall be composed of an equal number of ministerial and lay delegates, to be chosen by the Annual Conferences within their several jurisdictions according to an equitable plan to be provided for.

6. "We suggest the Quadrennial Conferences shall fix the boundaries of the Annual Conferences within their respective jurisdictions, and that the Annual Conferences shall be composed of all traveling preachers in full connection therewith and one lay representative from each pastoral charge.

7. "We suggest that the Quadrennial Conferences shall name the Bishops from their several jurisdictions, the same to be confirmed by the first house of the General Conferenede.

8. "We suggest that neither the General Conference

nor any of the Quadrennial Conferences be invested with final authority to interpret the constitutionality of its own actions."

THE ACTION ON THE ABOVE BY THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH, SOUTH

Your Committee on Church Relations recommends that the General Conference make the following declaration:

1. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, considers the plan outlined in the suggestions that were adopted by the Joint Commission representing the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and reported to the General Conferences of their respective Churches as tentative, but nevertheless containing the basic principles of a genuine unification of the Methodist bodies in the United States, and especially of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, by the method of reorganization.

2. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, regards the unification of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, by the plan proposed by the Joint Commission on Federation, as feasible and desirable, and hereby declares itself in favor of the unification of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in accordance with this general plan of reorganization, and in favor of the unification of all or any Methodist bodies who accept this proposed plan after it has been accepted by the Methodist Episcopal Church. However, we recommend that the colored

membership of the various Methodist bodies be formed into an independent organization holding fraternal relations with the reorganized and united Church.

3. The representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in the Federal Council of Methodism are hereby instructed and empowered to act as Commissioners with like Commissioners of the Methodist Episcopal Church, or with Commissioners of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, and other Methodist bodies in the United States, in elaborating and perfecting the tentative plan that has been proposed and in carrying forward such negotiations as have for their purpose, and may result in, the consummation of the proposed unification in accordance with the basic principles enunciated in the suggestions which were adopted by the Joint Commission and reported to the General Conferences. Should the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1916 declare itself in favor of unification through the proposed plan of reorganization and should appoint a Commission on Unification, separate from the Federal Council of Methodism, the representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, are hereby instructed and empowered to appoint a similar Commission that shall serve until the meeting of the next General Conference. The representatives of this Church in the Federal Council of Methodism, or such Commission on Unification as may be appointed, shall report to the next General Conference the full details of the plan of unification which may be agreed upon by the Federal Council of Methodism, or the Joint Commission on Unification, for its consideration and final determination. The representatives of this

Church are hereby instructed to say to the Joint Commission on Unification that the name preferred for the reorganized and united Church is the Methodist Church in America.

FRANK M. THOMAS, *Chairman;*
R. H. WYNN, *Secretary.*

MEMBERS OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL OF METHODISM

The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, May 22, 1914, appointed the following members of the Federal Council of Methodism to serve for four years: Bishop A. W. Wilson, Bishop E. E. Hoss, Bishop Collins Denny, Rev. Frank M. Thomas, D.D., Rev. W. J. Young, D.D., Rev. John M. Moore, D.D., Judge M. L. Walton, President H. N. Snyder, Litt.D., and Hon. Percy D. Maddin.

The Methodist Episcopal Church is represented in the Federal Council of Methodism by Bishop Earl Cranston, Bishop W. F. McDowell, Bishop N. Luccock, Rev. John F. Goucher, D.D., President Ezra B. Tipple, D.D., Rev. A. B. Storms, D.D., Mr. George Warren Brown, Mr. Alexander Simpson, Jr., and Justice Thos. S. Anderson.